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# XBN

XBOX NATION THE ADVANCED XBOX MAGAZINE

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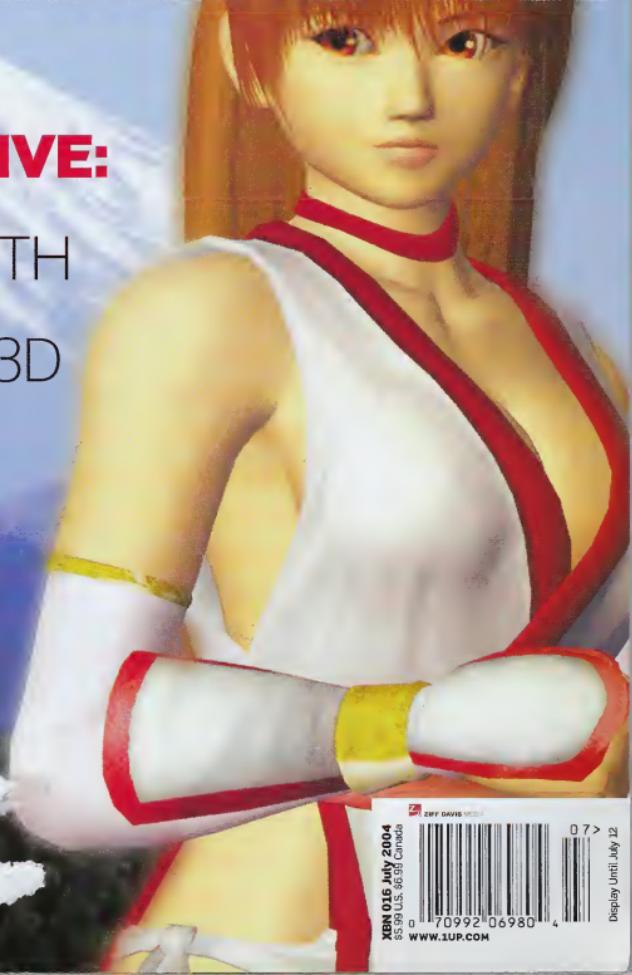
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THE THIRD AGE  
PARIAH  
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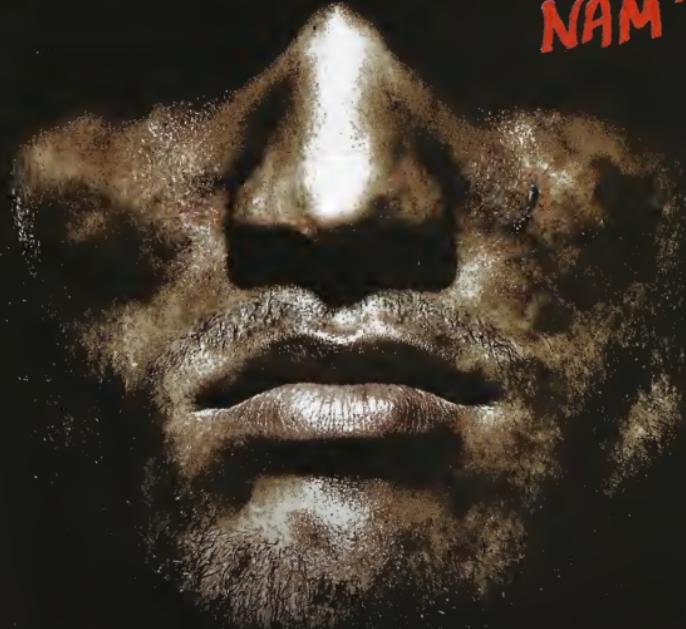
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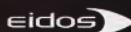
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E3 2004



**060**  
DEAD OR ALIVE: ULTIMATE



**076**  
LEADERS OF THE OLD SCHOOL

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Write to us at:  
XBN@ziffdavis.com. We would

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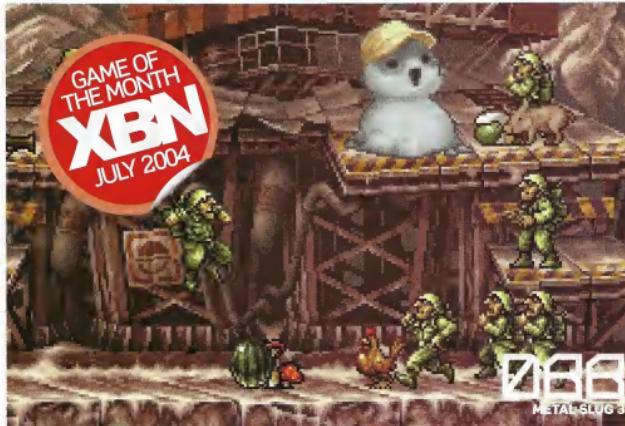
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GAME OF  
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**XBN**  
JULY 2004



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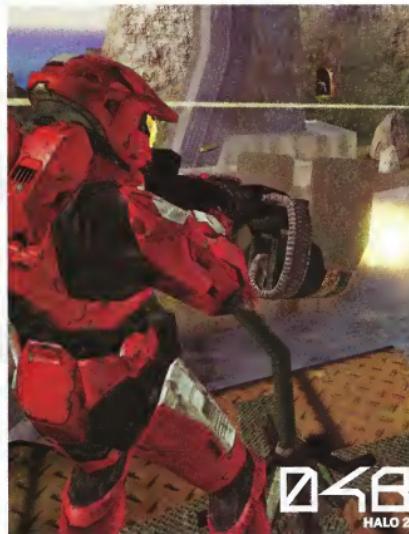


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**The all-new 1UP is here**, and it's exploding with new features! We've still got all of that great daily content you've come to know and love, but we're now the first-ever destination for gamers to meet, play, get informed, and show off.

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If you have a GameFace, we have  
a place for you to put it.



YOUR GAMEFACE



Show off your game collection  
and trade games with others!

A screenshot of the 'DRAFT' section of the Fantasy Football News website. The top navigation bar includes links for 'HOME', 'LIFETIME', 'WEEKLY', 'DRAFTS', 'DISCUSSION', 'FAQ PAGE OR INDEX', and 'SEARCH'. A sidebar on the left features 'YOUR TEAM HEAD' with a placeholder image, 'DRAFT TIPS', and 'DRAFT SCHEDULE'. The main content area has a header 'JOE RODICK: FAIR SHARE' and 'DRAFT'S GAMES'. It lists four games with their names, start times, and player statistics. Below the games is a section titled 'DRAFT TIPS: DRAFT DAY STRATEGY' with a link to 'DRAFT DAY TIPS'. To the right is a sidebar with 'DRAFT DAY TIPS' and 'DRAFT DAY TIPS' from various authors. At the bottom are sections for 'DRAFT DAY TIPS', 'DRAFT DAY TIPS', and 'DRAFT DAY TIPS'.

**Get YOUR GameFace on.**





TM

Get clubbing! Join clubs or create your own and invite all of your friends.

MY CLUBS (7)

-  **EGM Fans**  
Members: 364  
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  -  **Shoe's World**  
Members: 496  
[JOIN THIS CLUB](#)
  -  **SOCOM II Club**  
Members: 283  
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YOUR CLUBS

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- including us editors.

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|---|---|
|  | <b>John Davison</b><br>Oakland CA<br>Points: 75,250 |
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YOUR FRIENDS

You've got a voice, let it be heard! Tell everyone what you're playing or doing.

DANCE TEACHING JOURNAL

How does art fit

Some of you reading this will need no more than "See with good intent and witty dialogue" to understand why Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time is getting the sequel(s)-highest score possible. The rest will need a little more explanation than that, which I'll only see happen in private.



That setup in Prince of Persia is a very simple one, and it stays simple the whole way through. When the Prince's father tells another princess, advised by his enemies, that the Princess is eager to give him his freedom and end the curse of Time, when the whole party arrives at the Princess' palace and presents their gifts to the Sultan at a gift, the Sultan tells the Prince she's unbinding the Sands of Time, which transforms all of the Sultan's relatives because the Prince, the Sultan AND a certain princess named Farah are still in their human forms. It's like up to the Princess to release the gift using the power contained in the Dagger of Time.

Thursday, January 26, 2024 5:17 AM PERTH, WA

## Next-generation Consoles

The genealogy is pretty simple, too. The Prince has quite a few nephews, but nothing that seems paper-thin. The surviving son is a stretch, but it doesn't take much imagination of different (especially in a game with positive cross and cross-reinforcing cards) to believe it would be possible for an extremely eccentric fit to surface, like the Prince's son.

YOUR JOURNAL



We're all here. Join us at [1UP.com](http://1UP.com).

# EVERYTHING IN ITS RIGHT PLACE

## This year's E3 was the best yet for Xbox

Visiting the Xbox booth between 2000 and 2003 was akin to walking into a friend's fixer-upper house. Each visit, there'd be something new, but plenty missing. In 2000, Microsoft pointed to a plot, stuck a Spike in the ground and said it was going to build something—the initial work, it seemed, would be undertaken by a large robot and a girl with an X on her chest. By 2001, it had the basic building up, though it was mostly used for storage of slightly iff first-party games. The Master Chief had taken over construction detail, after the giant robot had presumably left for a lucrative whiskey-based-energy-drink advertising contract in Japan. A big blue box sat in the middle of the floor and impressed everybody with its contents: a (gasp) role-playing game called Project Ego. The toilets didn't flush; they just made a slightly worrying gurgling sound. But in 2002, the house that Microsoft built had full indoor plumbing and Internet access, thanks to its new Live service. First word on Halo 2 certainly helped plug some of the gaps under the doors and around the windows. The house gained its first pet—the world's first self-cleaning cat, Blink, that armed with a vacuum cleaner strapped to its back, could suck up its own poop. Our last visit, at E3 2003, revealed a house very near completion, with just a few pieces of key furniture missing, in the form of EA's Live lineup, and the likes of Fable and Halo 2 looking increasingly distant. E3 2004, for the record, is the year Microsoft finished the job. No big surprises, but finally, no gaps. Nothing missing. Everything in its right place. Live is alive, with EA on board. Halo 2 is nearly done. Ditto for Fable, and the Xbox lineup is finally wanting for nothing.

—Simon Cox, Editor-in-Chief

# XBN

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Cindy Lum Managing Editor  
Greg Orlando Reviews Editor  
Che Chou Previews Editor  
David Chen News Editor

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ILLUSTRATIONS/PHOTOGRAPHY  
Shufu K., Ray Serrano

ZIFF DAVIS GAME GROUP  
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John Devlin Editorial Director  
Gordon Cox Creative Director  
Cathy Brindifelli Business Director

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## Who's who on XBN

### SIMON COX

Editor-in-Chief

Young Cockney bootwie  
Simon Cox fled England after the great puddling scare of 1864, yodeling his way to America on the steaming port of the liner H.M.S. ship Sir Blighty Hogg. Hetty recalls little of his deeds, save for the fact that he founded the two-penny broadband Xbox Nation sometime in 1864, some 100-plus years before the invention of the Xbox.

### EVAN SHAMOON

Editor

Even Shamon, like his hat-wearing idol Van Helsing, was at one time, seldom seen without his stupid green hat. Friends and foes alike would knock the hat, attempting to knock it off. Shamon's head or otherwise abscond with it. Now, in a new phase of rationalism, Shamon has stopped wearing it, prompting everyone to ask, "What's with the hat?"

### DAVID CHEN

News Editor

By the time you read this, news editor David Chen will have attended his 125th consecutive E3 show. And he still has yet to see his one, true killer—a sheepheading game that's been a secret. And so Chen's once bitter tears yet again, wondering when his parole will come.

### CHE CHOU

Previews Editor

Knighted Sir Kiliclus for his humanitarian efforts killing aliens, Vietnamese irregulars, Nazi bastards, Covenant drones, Somalians, Japanese, dusty galaxies, and every other species that gets in the way. And guess what? Che Chou is actually pretty sweet. On killing in the first-person perspective. And sometimes the third.

### ANDREW MENDOZA

Associate Art Director

Associate art director turned supervillain

Andrew Mendoza now mentors San Francisco with his ray, which might be an indigestion ray or perhaps a ray of entail, we are not sure. Thank God he has a ray gun. Andrew is from San Francisco to an outlying suburb. He is also a big proponent of the Superhero Emancipation Act. Vote yes on Proposition 642!

### CINDY LUM

Managing Editor

Here's managing editor Cindy Lum, and she's all, "You do your work and you can have a toffee," and you're all like, "But I hate you, and I hate work, and I especially hate toffees." And there you go and hurt her feelings, for which you should feel really sorry and will likely be fed to snakes.

### ANDREW BURWELL

Art Director

I'm not sure how they say "you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs?" Well, Xbox Nation's art director Andrew Burwell would like you to know that he says "Duh!" to that. He would like you to know that an omelette, by definition, must be made with eggs removed from their shells, thus broken. Mmm, eggs.

### GREG ORLANDO

Reviews Editor

Destined for greatness or a great crushing between the gears of life's cruel machinery, Greg Orlando has modeled his life on three great principles: He does not make monkeys; he just trans them; he does not eat eggs; and because you denied him, you are deemed to have supplied it. There is no man like him for claiming that all well and good, but it's not putting food in his stomach.

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# INBOX

LETTERS JULY 2004



## WRITE US:

As a member of the Xbox Nation, you too have a forum in which to share your voice. Send e-mail to [XBN@ziffdavis.com](mailto:XBN@ziffdavis.com) or drop us a postcard:

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San Francisco, CA  
94105

And yes, the letters are answered by a real human being...called Lettertron 6850.

## LETTER OF THE MONTH

### Shadow business

Hey XBN, I've been hearing a lot of speculation about a new *Shadowrun* game being made by FASA Studios, the Crimson Skies developers. The old *Shadowrun* is one of my all-time favorite games, and I would kill for a new one. I'm hoping to hear something at E3 to prove or disprove the rumors, so I can get on with my life. Have you heard anything?

blzbub  
(from the JUP.com boards)

Rumor control: Someone, somewhere, said something about *Shadowrun* being due for a revival. For all XBN knows, it was nothing more than a wishful, off-the-cuff remark. More to the point, whether or not the *Shadowrun* name still carries enough commercial clout to warrant an update is highly debatable.



### BRICK LOVE

In response to Stephen Spear's letter in issue #14 about the Controller Sucks! I feel his pain, I too, complained about the "toof of bread" controller that came with the Xbox. I remember first playing Halo with my buds after we had been religiously playing Perfect Dark and thinking this controller sucks compared to the Nintendo 64 controller. But after a while, I got used to the "toof of bread," and when I finally bought my Xbox, my wife complained about the bulky controller, so I bought her the Controller Sucks! I tried it but could never get used to it.

By the way, could you guys help me find a wireless controller that has the same button layout and feel as the original Xbox controller? Original controller = AWESOME! Controller S = The original controller is too big for my little girly hands and hurts them, boohoo.

Ronald W. Pant

Man, we could really go for a loaf of bread right about now.

Oh, and try the Mad Catz Lynx controller for Xbox. Its layout and heft fairly well mirrors the original Xbox controller's. The Logitech Wireless Controller and the Hip Wireless are excellent options, too, but their configurations (especially with the black and white buttons) have been slightly altered from the original.

### FIGHT THE POWER, PART II

I'm writing this in regards to the letter by Joe Dennis published in issue #13, suggesting a boycott of Electronic Arts. This guy is not alone, as I feel exactly the same way about EA. I had a bad feeling about the company when it decided not to support the Dreamcast. Now with its refusal to support Xbox Live, it is getting out of hand. I don't have Xbox Live because I just disconnected my DSL, but EA owes it to all the Xbox owners who do have Live. I will not buy any EA games for any system, including PC

(sorry, wifey, no Sims 2 for you), until EA supports Live.

Emperor Samoth,  
aka P.J. Camacho

Electronic Arts representative: Hello?  
XBN: This is Xbox Nation. Put your Xbox games on Xbox Live.  
EA representative: Good idea. Done!

## A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT SOME GAMES

Hey, guys. I just wanted to ask you a few questions about some games.



1. The Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy game you featured in the May issue (#14) looks tight. But I have a huge problem with M-rated games. Will Psi-Ops be an M-rated, bloody romp into psycho mind control, or will it be a T-rated mind takeover?

2. The May issue stated that the upcoming game *Guilty Gear XX #Reloaded* would be Xbox Live-enabled. I'm one of the few Xbox owners who does not have Live (I've heard the jokes, so please stop), so will the game have a non-Live mode?

Damion Rohman

Midway speaketh thusly about Psi-Ops:

*The Mindgate Conspiracy:* "Psi-Ops has been given an M rating by the ESRB," a representative for the company says. That said, the game is filled with open-ended gameplay, allowing players multiple ways to solve the various puzzles in the game. Players have the option to approach a specific situation by going in guns ablaze, using their psionic powers, or by utilizing stealth. And fear not, *Guilty Gear XX #Reloaded*



# "WILL PSI-OPS BE AN M-RATED, BLOODY ROMP INTO PSYCHO MIND CONTROL, OR WILL IT BE A T-RATED MIND TAKEOVER?"

will have an offline mode. But your friends are right to mock you about your lack of liveness.

## MONK-EY BUSINESS

In Chapter 6 of *Ninja Gaiden*, how do I open the safe in the monk's room? I've tried using the monk's notes, but I couldn't get it to work. What do I do and how do I do it?

—Jarmad Kemp

**Just try: 2 left, 7 right, 1 right, 2 left.** In the future, *Xbox Nation* heartily recommends visiting the recently revamped [www.1up.com](http://www.1up.com), which features plenty of walkthroughs for all of your favorite games—and then some.

## FRIENDTECH TO THE LITTLE MAN

In regards to the Friendtech article in issue #14: Isn't what they're doing (tricking out Xboxes) illegal? If it is, how are they able to operate in the United States? Also, don't game magazines—the mainstream ones, anyway—typically have policies against promoting illegal activity?

Anonymous

**Xbox Nation stands by its record:** 38 arrests and zero convictions. Chastisement duly noted, even though it's not strictly illegal to modify an Xbox. Nor is it illegal to sell modified Xboxes. We should also add that it's *XBN's* job to cover Xbox news—and this is news.

## NO KEYBOARD ADAPTER FOR YOU!

I understand that there's a new product called the "Magic Box" that allows someone to play an Xbox using other consoles' controllers. For those who would rather not give up their keyboard and mouse, do you know if Microsoft has plans to make an adapter for a keyboard and mouse?

Blake Lewis

**Microsoft had this to say about your letter—which, if you were paying attention, Blake Lewis, the company answered in last issue's inbox:** "Developers and publishers of games are ultimately the decision makers when it comes to supporting external hardware in their games. It is their decision whether or not to support devices other than the standard gamepad in their products, such as the 40-button controller for Steel Battalion or the dance pad for Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix. Currently, there are no plans to distribute an official Xbox-branded keyboard for use on the Xbox console."

## BLACK HAWK BLUES

Over a year ago, Delta Force: Black Hawk Down was released for PC. It was reported that an Xbox release would be coming soon after. There has been no official word whatsoever since then about any release on Xbox. Recently, I was at a website that listed an Xbox PAL version coming out on June 25. Is this true or a pre-order trick? Will Delta Force be arriving in the United States?

Joe Marszałek

**Yes. Also, yes. Plus,** turn to page 79 for all the latest details on this game—which can be fit into a 50-word box.

## THAT OLD CHESTNUT

Hey XBN... Here's one for ya: Why is it that every movie that seems to do good at the box office seems to get some sort of subpar game (not all of them, people, so stop yellin! Gez) released? I'm almost afraid to purchase a game that has a film tie-in! The Hulk's dismal smash-and-

bash repetitive gameplay, *Scooby-Doo's* elementary focus of gameplay, and any Star Wars game that had a direct film link almost drown my desire to anticipate *Chronicles of Riddick*, *Spiderman 2* (yeah...that's right...NO HYPHEN!), or *The Punisher*. Almost drowned, I tell ya, but I keep hope alive yet longer. Life support or no—hope lingers. Here's my true purple purple (how's that for a plot twist...get it? Twisted? Where is my chalkboard??).

Why did all the money-hungry game manufacturers miss *Dawn of the Dead* as a good movie to game? Was this too close to PS2's precious *Resident Evil* (great movie) franchise? (mean, come on!) No-BRANER! *Max Grand Theft Auto*, *Resident Evil*, and *Unreal Championship*? Why didn't we get a *007* in '98? Maybe I should be glad that they didn't screw these up. At least I won't see a videogame of *Mean Girls* (fingers are crossed and my bladder is full!!!) or *Passion of the Christ*; it just seems that we are getting everything on the big screen thrown into a game (read: hey, we got a couple of months before X opens on the big screen, let's make a game!). For the love of microchips and all that is silicon...to all the big guys, BE PICKER! Take the time to produce something gripping and...hmmpmm...keep 'em coming!

Hey...quality of man...don't blame me!!!

Jackusshammer

**So many questions, so little time.** High-profile movies such as *The Hulk* and *Star Wars* have accompanying games because they sell ("See the Movie! Buy the Happy Meal Play the Game!") While it's likely that the idea of a *Dawn of the Dead* game was pitched, publishers would likely have responded that it was an unproven license (similarly, it's a safe bet that the sequel to *XXX* will have an accompanying game, given the success of the "franchise"). Had a game been approved, picked up, and made, there's no guarantee it would have turned out well; after all, games based on the *Star Wars* license haven't fared so well as a rule of thumb, at least in the quality department.

And while a mishmash of *Grand Theft Auto*, *Resident Evil*, and *Unreal Championship* sounds...well, intriguing...it's easier said than done. On the bright side of things, *The Chronicles of Riddick* is superb, *The Punisher* looks promising, and—should it build on the finer points of its predecessor—*Spider-Man* will be a winner, as well. //



## THIS AND THAT

Dear XBN: I am writing to ask if Microsoft will bring *N.U.D.E.* to the States. That game (and *Fable*) is why I bought an Xbox. If that is not brought to the States, will the Japanese release of *N.U.D.E.* be region-free? Also, will *Jockey Road* be region-free? Kevin Creedy PS. Why don't you call *Xbox Next* "MSN"? (like MSN) for short?

No, no, no, and we don't really feel like it. Sorry, but you'll have to get your (kind of creepy, honestly) kicks elsewhere, Kevin.



# SPIDER-MAN 2™

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PlayStation 2

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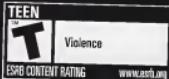
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JUNGLES OF THE CONGO, YOU MUST

TRACK DOWN AND DISARM A DEVICE

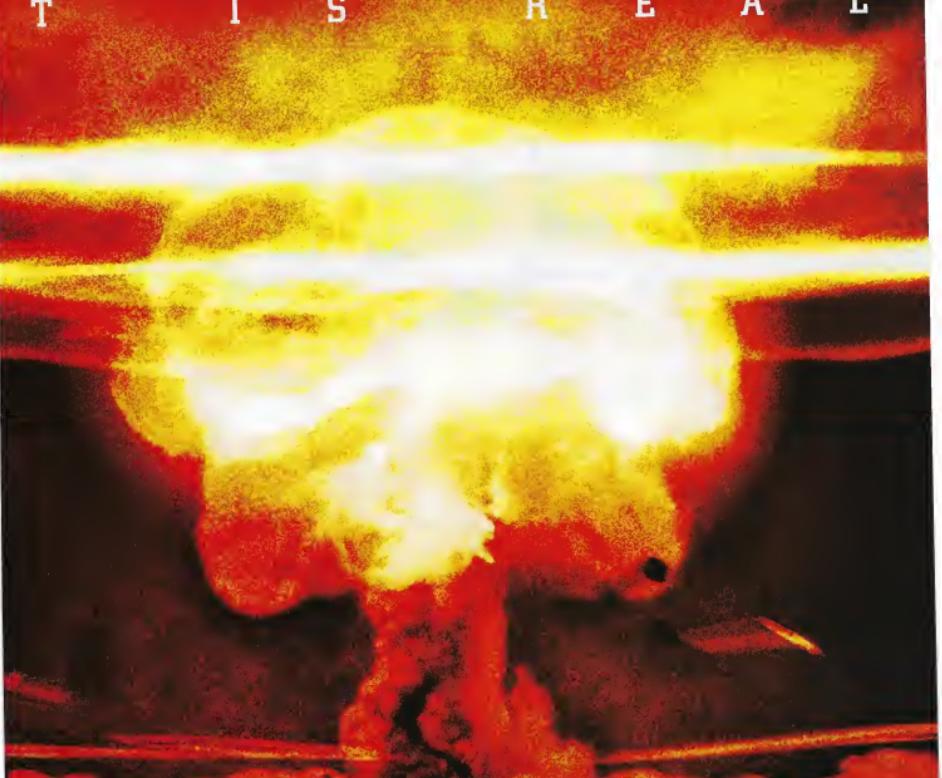
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# XPRESS

XBOX NEWS NETWORK JULY 2004

# ELECTRO FOR THE PEOPLEX





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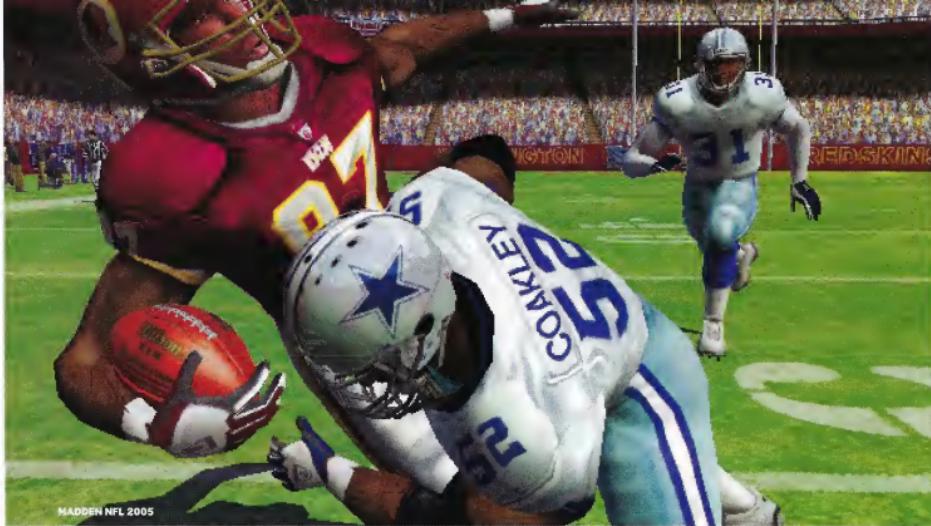
**It was the very greatest show on earth—or, at least, the very latest. During one week in May, the videogame industry ground to a halt as 65,000-plus game players, makers, and marketers descended upon Los Angeles for a cacophony of sights, sounds, and a few surprises. How did Microsoft's big black box fare? Come on inside and see for yourself...**

#### XBOX, STAGE LEFT

Playing to a packed house on a Monday night in the Shrine Auditorium, Microsoft used its annual preshow press conference to stick it to competitors Sony and Nintendo. Xbox evangelist J. Allard took the stage following a video presentation of some of the most promising Xbox titles due later this year, including *Unreal Championship 2*, *Spectrum Warrior*, *Fable*, *MechAssault 2: Lone Wolf*, *Star Wars: Republic Commando*, and Rare's *Conker: Live and Reloaded*. And then things got interesting...

An elaborate parody of NBC's *The Apprentice*—replete with an all-too-real Donald Trump—pitted team Xbox (J. Allard, Peter Moore, and Robbie Bach) against team PlayStation 2 (composed of imitations of Sony VP Ken Kutaragi, SCEA head Kaz Hirai, and VP Andrew House). The goal? To create a compelling online service for consoles, with the dubious honor of crafting an RPG based on Trump's life as the prize. Predictably, team Xbox got out and hustled—digging up real dirt on the streets about what gamers really want to play—while team PS2 pretty much...well, anyway, Trump ended up firing the boys from Sony. Adding insult to injury, the ranked Kutaragi, Hirai, and House had their tax snagged by none other than a smirking Bill Gates. An elaborate fantasy, to be sure, but pretty good for securing a few hearty laughs.

Next up was one of several big events of the night—Moore introduced a demonstration (and release date of November 9) of *Halo 2*'s multiplayer mode, which received considerable applause, followed by more trailers of *Dead or Alive: Ultimate*, *Doom 3*, *Jade Empire*, and the recently revealed *Forza Motorsport*. Finally, Robbie Bach delineated the leadership plan that would guide Xbox going forward: games (*Halo 2*, *Doom 3*, et al.), software support (XNA, Xbox Live), and partnerships. At this point, Don Matriss, EA's head of worldwide studios, strode onstage joined by the cover model for each and every one of EA Sports' upcoming games—including none other than Muhammad Ali—to announce the publisher's support for Xbox Live, which was met with thunderous applause. The one big no-show of the event? That Donald Trump RPG. But there's always next year...



MADDEN NFL 2005

## E3 SELECT

Over the following pages, you will see a number of E3 Select choices, in descending order. These are the games that impressed us the most either because they were better than we expected (*Battlefront*), or because they were exactly as good as we anticipated (*Doom 3*). No prizes for guessing which game is number one...

On the show floor, all of the big Xbox franchises were appropriately represented—and appropriately impressive. For those who saw it, *Halo 2* stole the show. **Splinter Cell 3** flexed a mind-blowing graphics engine and some fancy new ways to break unsuspecting victims' necks. The venerable *Doom 3* showed up only on Xbox, with no PC version in sight. *Prince of Persia 2* flaunted a vastly improved fighting engine, while *Burnout 3* wowed audiences with an EA-fueled presentation and a dazzling video of *Dead or Alive: Ultimate* ran on a huge screen high above Tecmo's booth.

Perhaps more interesting than these big hitters, however, were the very tangible trends apparent throughout the show. "Urban games" once again reared their heads, first-person shooters solidified Xbox as their console of choice, and it's clear that Xbox Live is finally becoming the industry staple Microsoft had planned it to be from day one. What follows is Xbox Nation's official take on E3—the important games, the relevant themes, the big winners, and the big losers. For the sake of space and good taste (in no particular order), any references to booth babes, excessive consumption of alcoholic beverages, or both will be severely curtailed (starting right...now).

### LIVE OR LET DIE

Microsoft stuck to its online guns with an impressive sneak peek at Xbox Live in 2004 and beyond. Although the megalomaniac announcement—that Electronic Arts and Microsoft have finally buried the hatchet, allowing for the next wave of EA titles to appear on Xbox Live—was a surprise to no one who frequents the Internet, the prospect of playing EA's alarmingly good lineup on Live

is a tantalizing prospect.

The two companies have signed an agreement committing EA to at least 15 Live-enabled games for the foreseeable future. Expect to see the full suite of EA Sports titles and action games such as **Need for Speed Underground 2**, **Burnout 3**, **TimeSplitters: Future Perfect**, and the breath-taking **Battlefield: Modern Combat** to populate the Live landscape later this year. What remains unclear is whether this new alliance between Microsoft and EA is truly long term, as neither company has commented on what lies beyond the initial 15-game rollout on Live.

But the future of Xbox Live is about more than just EA games. Leading by example is **Halo 2**, quite possibly the best online shooter ever made on any system—see the full hands-on report on page 48 of this issue. In short, the game is simply fantastic. Other Live standouts included arena shooter *Unreal*.

**Championship 2**, as well as the now-*Unreal*-esque **Conker: Live and Reloaded**, a previously reviled game whose online cohesion and generally good looks took showgoers by complete surprise.

The commendable Xbox Live Arca, a collection of nonpremium titles (e.g., **Bejeweled**, **Dig Dug**, **Galaxian**) available free of charge to entice casual users to the fold, aims to broaden Live's demographic and

appeal. But overall, E3 showed that developers overwhelmingly support Live. From indie massively multiplayer shooters like MicroForce's *Citizen Zero* to Japanese offerings such as Sega's *Outrun 2* and **Spikeout: Battle Street**, Xbox Live is undeniably positioned to be the de facto online platform of choice.

In addition, Microsoft shed light on the future of Xbox Live—and judging by what was announced at the press conference, the future is all about convergence. By using tools introduced in its XNA development kit, the company plans to unify online communications between Xbox and PC via Live, incorporating nifty features such as real-time video chat and bridging the divide between desktop and set-top gaming. With Xbox Live as the centerpiece of its E3

### FORZA!

Project Gotham Racing 2 is dead, but there's still a Gran Turismo-sized pothole in Microsoft's gold road to success. Enter the wonderful *Forza Motorsport*, with its real-world cars and physics.





## UNREAL 3 Technology

It's hard to impress with fancy visual effects alone in today's competitive digital graphics landscape. But whatever growth hormones Epic Games is pumping into its 3D graphics technology certainly seems to be working. Most impressive was the developer's use of a technique whereby multimillion-polygon models are converted into 3D textures—effectively allowing for incredibly detailed character models (left) and environments (below) to be produced without a major hit on the processor load. Basically, this is some next-level sh\*t, and you gotta see it.



THE URbz: SIMS IN THE CITY



UNREAL ENGINE 3

presence. Microsoft may not have made gaming history—instead, it rolled out a road map for the system's future and its legion of more than one million online gamers.

### URBANIZATION

Winning the Unsurprising Trend of the Show award for the second year running was the "urban games" category, characterized by such affectations as carjacking, reasonably accurate renditions of real cities, and the obligatory, ubiquitous hip-hop soundtrack.

Not surprisingly, nearly every publisher seems to be getting in on the action. Atari showed a fairly intriguing video of its Marc Ecko-branded **Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure**. Developed by The Collective, the game is apparently "based on urban culture and graffiti art," and that's it as



## E3 SELECT No. 8

PUBLISHER: LUCASARTS

PLAYERS: 1-16

DEVELOPER: PANDEMIC

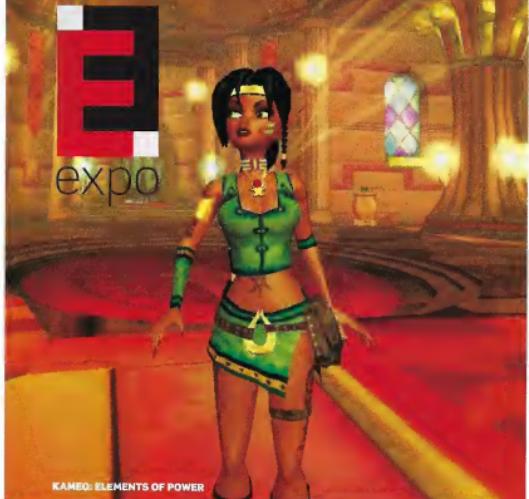
LIVE: YES



### STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT

The universe is an apple ripe for the plucking, and players can fight over it in LucasArts' tantalizing *Star Wars: Battlefront*. A brief test of the online game featured the ice planet Hoth being fought over by Rebels and Imperial Forces. Two-man snowspeeders (one pilot, one gunner) attacked huge AT-ATs with tow cables, while other rebel fighters manned

cannons to bring the armored beasts down. The game supports 16 players via Xbox Live, and battles can be fought in first- or third-person on Endor, Hoth, Geonosis, Tatooine, Naboo, and five other *Star Wars* hot spots. The game supports four factions, although it's not possible to mix Rebels and The Empire with the Clone Army and The Separatists.



KAMEO: ELEMENTS OF POWER

## KAMEO

↳ Although Perfect Dark Zero was a predictable no-show for reclusive developer Rare, its ex-GameCube title Kameo—now an Xbox exclusive—turned heads and showed nonbelievers that *Grabbed By The Ghoulies* may have been an isolated incident. Using shape-shifting as the main motif, Kameo features a variety of gameplay styles for innovative fun.

far as the details go. Possibly, it's something along the lines of Sega's classic ***Jet Set***

**Radio**. But nothing's been confirmed, other than Ecco's lofty aspirations. "This game will be genre defining. Revolutionary. We will put the flag in the ground of popular culture with ***Getting Up***," he says.

Ubisoft entered the urban fray for the first time as well with its ***Notorious: Die to Drive***.

**Essentially** a vehicular combat game, ***Notorious*** has players starting as an up-and-coming West Coast gangster who starts off with only two friends, a single car, and a baseball bat... and you can fill in the rest.

Perhaps the most impressive (and least pandering) game of the urban lot was EA's

***Def Jam Fight for NY***, which sports an impressive fighting engine (courtesy of revered Japanese developer Aki), convincing character models, and interactive environments (see page 28).

Most committed to, uh, "the underground," however, was Fidio, which made a big deal of its ***25 to Life*** (think ***SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs*** with Bloods and Crips replacing Mafiosi and terrorists), as well as ***Get on Da Mic*** (think ***Dance Revolution***).



25 TO LIFE

## \*E3 SELECT No.7

PUBLISHER: TBD  
PLAYERS: TBD

DEVELOPER: CRITERION SOFTWARE  
LIVE: YES // RELEASE: 2005



## BLACK

After reinventing the racing genre with its ***Burnout*** series, Criterion is ready to give first-person shooters their overdue makeover with ***Black***. The studio has established a design manifesto called "Guncraft," which dictates that guns—due to their intimidating and empowering nature—should be a terrifying and gratifying rush to fire. Although the level sampled at E3 was

little more than a glorified tech demo to show off ***Black***'s impressive gunplay, what was there was absolutely mind-blowing. Imagine an FPS that feels as good as it looks, with an amazing amount of destructible detail in the environments and a real kick to every weapon. Still a year away from release, ***Black*** has incredible potential.



# i, ROBOT

ONE MAN SAW IT COMING

A science-fiction thriller from director Alex Kurtzman (The Mummy Returns) and screenwriter Michael Arndt (Ratatouille). It stars Will Smith as a robot who begins to question his programming when he falls in love with a woman (Vivica A. Fox). As he uncovers a plot to wipe out all humans, he must decide whether to follow his orders or his heart.

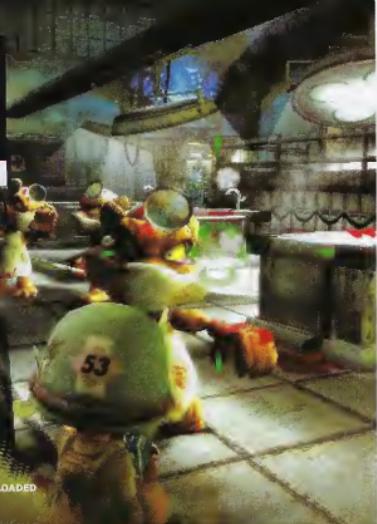


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JULY 16



# E



CONKER: LIVE AND RELOADED

## CONKER: L&R

Surprise! Once the laughingstock of the Xbox lineup, Rare's *Conker: Live and Reloaded* is now the belle of the ball with its gorgeously gory online play. Cute rodent heads explode in beautiful crimson sprays, the environments are high-resolution wonders, and even the redone single-player adventure seems to be sliced bread all over again. Good show, Rare.

sporting gold chains and a Kongi tilted at 45 degrees) and a sequel to *Backyard Wrestling*. The game features the unsolicited return of the Insane Clown Posse to videogames, as well as such notable wrestlers as the Sandman and such notable pom stars as Tera Patrick.

And then there's EA's *The Urbz: Sims in the City*. It may become either another million-selling addition to the franchise or the most ridiculous attempt at urbanity since the country mouse moved to the city (or quite possibly both), but Will Wright's *Sims* are hitting the streets for yet another chapter in their best-selling saga.

### EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Given that Rare's only Xbox game to date is the regrettable *Grabbed by the Ghoulies*, it's no surprise the once-revered developer has been on the butt end of plenty of jokes. Imagine the surprise, then, when both the latest take on the foul-mouthed *Conker* and *Kameo: Elements of Power* shone quite brightly indeed. *Conker*—rechristened *Live and Reloaded*—looks far more promising than previously imagined on both



MERCENARIES

the single- and multiplayer fronts. The "classic" solo game has been lovingly overhauled, but it's the multiplayer mode—replete with gameplay options, downloadable content, vehicles, and occasionally rousing trash talking—that Microsoft chose to focus on. Similarly lighthearted (and pleasantly surprising) but far less robust was *Kameo: Elements of Power*, which requires the titular princess to master her ability to transform into an array of monsters on the fly. In all, the game looked great and played nicely, with colorful onscreen visual details and mimic action—it also seemed like quite a bit of fun.

But there were plenty of nonexclusives

**SPEAK SOFTLY**  
Quiet moments  
at E3: none

## \*E3 SELECT No.6

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT  
PLAYERS: 1 // LIVE: NO

DEVELOPER: BIOWARE  
RELEASE: Q1/2005



### JADE EMPIRE

In case you missed *Xbox Nation* #15's cover story, *Jade Empire* is coming, and it's going to be big. How big? Mythically big—chock full of exotic environments, outlandish monsters, a cast of characters to recruit or repulse, and a fighting system that's remarkably deep, but hardly impenetrable. Showgoers and XBN staffers alike were impressed by the game's lavish graphics

engine, and the hitherto-worrisome combat system bore up under scrutiny and hands-on time quite nicely. So now that that's settled, what's left? Nothing short of an epic story line packed with moral dilemmas, ethical quandaries, and tangible emotional appeal. It's a tall order to be sure, but not worrisome in the slightest—that's what BioWare does, and does so damn well.

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SNOWBLIND



SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM

## \* E3 SELECT No.5

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS // DEVELOPER: DICE  
PLAYERS: 1-24 // LIVE: YES // RELEASE: FALL 2004



### BATTLEFIELD: MODERN COMBAT

If you build an online battlefield, they will come. Nobody knows this adage better than Electronic Arts. Having built an award-winning killing zone for PC gamers, EA is now about to bring the same free-form gameplay to Xbox Live. Eschewing World War II Europe for 21st century Asia, *Battlefield: Modern Combat* pits three factions (the U.S., the Chinese, and a Middle-Eastern coalition) against one

another in an all-out orgy of deadly hardware and team strategy. Using vehicles such as tanks, helicopters, and even jets, up to 24 players tip the balance of power by capturing and holding neutral and hostile military bases. The rows of networked kiosks dedicated to *Combat* on the show floor in Microsoft and EA's booth were met with an overwhelmingly positive response.

### TRADE WINDS

Yesterday, Japanese-developed games ruled E3's show floor.

Today? Not so much. But as Xbox gains ground in overall market share, it's apparent that its lack of Japanese flavor is fast becoming negligible. Still, gems from the East shore in the form of Sega's *Outrun 2*, as well as *Metal Wolf Chaos* and *Otogi 2*, two gorgeous action romps by From Software,

that managed to engage, impress, and surprise—especially in the shooter department. Not satisfied with stopping the show with *Burnout 3*, Criterion Games also demoed the ferociously kinetic *Black*—it's a ways off, but it's already at the top of many most-wanted lists. Close is *Far Cry*.

**Instincts**, a port of the superlative PC FPS. Do not let the “P” word scare you off—Ubisoft's going all out to make this a worthwhile look, with new vehicles, weapons, and features such as stealth moves and the ability to set traps. Oh yes, and that hefty hard drive's finally going to get put to good use—a level editor ships with *Instincts* in the fall.

**LucasArts' Mercenaries** and **Star Wars: Battlefront** also exceeded expectations with plenty of explosive action, while *Eidos' Snowblind* came out from the cold (and pretty much nowhere) to enthrall showgoers with its futuristic aesthetic and well-thought-out weaponry. And for those who like to settle disputes with their fists, there was *Ubisoft's Rocky Legends*. Featuring a pantheon of pugilists from the movies and otherwise, the game showcased finely tuned

TOURNAMENTS 24/7



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## GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

What do you do after producing a enough 007 games to feed a country? Why, you let people play as the villain, of course. EA's next Bondian opus puts players in the shoes of a disgraced 007 agent who has been hired by Goldfinger to act out his sinister plot (sadly, you don't get to kill Mr. Bond along the way). Expect characters wielding dual guns, explosive set pieces, and plenty of antiheroism in what looks to be a worthy successor to the hallowed name. Also expect full splitscreen and Xbox Live multiplayer support 'cuz, you know, it's GoldenEye.



GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

## FIRE WHEN READY

The oft-mentioned and frequently delayed Crusaders: Kingdoms Under Fire resurfaced at E3 with news that the classic wargame will finally see release thanks to the joint efforts of Microsoft and NCSoft.



GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT



GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

## E3 SELECT No.4

PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS // DEVELOPER: EA CANADA/AKI  
PLAYERS: 1-4 // LIVE NO // RELEASE: 09/04



## DEF JAM: FIGHT FOR NEW YORK

Perhaps it's EA's three-pronged development approach that makes *Def Jam: Fight for New York* appear to be such a slick overall package. The megacorporation is leveraging its size on this one, with the engine and gameplay being handled by Japanese developer Aki. Licensing and creative direction is under the eye of EA's NYC branch, while the blending of these disparate elements is being

handled by EA's Vancouver development studio.

A hands-on playtest revealed very tight game mechanics, and in-game representations of Ludacris and Redman were remarkably on point. At one point Ludacris' head was repeatedly smashed into a wooden post until said post splintered. Then one of the wooden shards was picked up and used to stab Ludacris in the neck, making all good in the world.

fist-to-face action, which could make it a solid alternative to (if not a replacement for) EA's supertative *Fight Night*.

## THE WAR RAGES ON...

Black Hawk choppers flying patterns over the Los Angeles Convention Center is nothing if not a sign of the times for videogames. The number of military shooters and their various offshoots this year reached epidemic proportions across all gaming platforms.

While the presence of most of these military titles on the show floor came as little surprise, it was nonetheless impressive to see how far a few of these games have come in just a few short months.

On the single-player side, Gearbox's

## SRS: STREET RACING SYNDICATE





PARIAH

Historically obsessive **Brothers in Arms** took XBN's top medal of honor this year with its incredible ambition and innovative fusion of the first-person shooter and real-time strategy genres. Deep, brutal, and occasionally educational, **Brothers in Arms** is a fun, thinking man's shooter. For multiplayer mayhem, avert your thousand-yard stare to EA's **Battlefield: Modern Combat**, a deliciously ambitious multiplayer team deathmatch shooter featuring a wide array of vehicles and weapons for improvisational strategies and gameplay.

**Ghost Recon 2** and **Mercenaries** are two additional war games demanding players' trigger-happy attention. Although it's too early to tell if it will replace **Rainbow Six**

as the Tom Clancy game to play on Live in the near future, **Recon 2** is shaping up nicely with its newly implemented third-person perspective but features more than enough free-form physics-driven destruction to satisfy both military gamers and fans of Rockstar Games' "go-anywhere" **Grand Theft Auto** series alike.

### JUST SHOOT ME

Perhaps because of **Halo**, and also because of Xbox's technological similarities to the PC, the first-person shooter has always been the primary point of distinction between Xbox



FAR CRY INSTINCTS



STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO

and its rivals. While other systems struggle to keep pace, Microsoft's hardware is strengthening its grip on that most visceral of genres. Of the tens of games shown in this category at E3, XBN spied some of special note. Hands-on time with EA's **GoldenEye: Rogue Agent** revealed a well-paced and crisp-looking game with a number of nice touches, including bad guys used as human shields, strategic use of cover, and the much-awaited EVL A1—which makes the usual tactic of burn-rushing targets the worst idea since the Segway scooter.

Ubisoft Montreal's remaking of the PC shooter **Far Cry** is also progressing nicely. Titled **Far Cry Instincts**, the game sported reflective water and a playable jet ski, though

### BUNGIE BOSS:

XBN met with ex-Bungie boss, and co-creator of **Halo**, Alan Sanjour. At the show he spilled the beans on his new company—Widebread. It's too early to talk specifically about his new project, but he has plenty to say about the kind of games he wants to make. Full interview next issue...



FORZA MOTOSPORT

## GO PIMP YOUR OWN RIDE

By all accounts, the Xbox lineup has never been short of racing games, offering some of the genre's best-loved franchises in **Project Gotham** and **Rolls-Royce Challenge**, but the emergence of **Forza Motorsport**, Microsoft's so-called **Gran Turismo** killer, rounds things out nicely. Playable on the show floor, the game is coming along fast, with crisp graphics and spot-on handling; it's still too early to say whether it will be the true all-arounder **Gran Turismo** is so clearly becoming, but all of the signs look good. Microsoft had the game split between three Xboxes, each with its own screen, arcade style—though it seemed unclear as to whether this was likely to remain a feature of the retail version.

The current hot-as-asphalt trend for street racing also made its presence felt with Acclaim's **Juiced**, EA's **Need For Speed Underground 2** and the recently rescued (from the ashes of 3DO) **SRS: Street Racing Syndicate**. **Underground 2** looks promising, and **SRS**—once written off as a bit of a stretch for Trip Hawkins' ill-fated company—is now emerging as a streetworthy contender. The buzz on the show floor for both was positively deafening—or was that just the techno music?



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2

XBN's reckoning to be set on a prison planet. The early playable levels revealed a title with great potential, though the epic feel of the initial screens has yet to be fully realized.

But the most impressive shooter of E3 was shown behind closed doors—and is at least a year away. Criterion's *Black* did little more than allow players to shoot automatic weapons at SWAT-type dudes, but it did so with such power and ferocity that once all the targets were dead, it was still fun shooting the letters off the side of an office building and then blowing out all the windows, spraying glass and chunks of masonry onto the streets below. To finish the job, any abandoned cars unlucky enough to be parked in the alleyway had their hubcaps and wheels shot up, windows destroyed, and engines set ablaze. Bullets ricocheted up from drain covers and off of metal doors. Players walked away from the demo shaken and wanting more. Much more.

#### FOOD, BADLY:

Awful food served at E3, in ascending order of awfulness: miso soup at the Figueras hotel; "ham sandwich" served on a crescent model of bread in the Ziff Davis press room; cafeteria hamburger with nearly zero polygon count; and awful beef textures.

many of the features that will make or break this venture, such as the trap system, have yet to be shown. Graphically, some of the lushness of the PC version's jungle seemed to have vanished, perhaps more obviously affected by the Xbox's RAM limitations, but the newly announced level editor, which allows you to deform the landscape to create hills, gullies, water areas, and villages to fight in, sounds impressive.

After what seemed like an extraordinary wait, *Doom 3* was finally playable on Xbox and drew a huge and constant crowd with its effective combination of first-person action and survival-horror. Technically stunning (the lighting effects are the best yet seen on any system—ditto for the animation), Id's game

faltered only slightly in the mechanics department. Thanks to the fact that you can use only a flashlight or a weapon—but not both at the same time—the game requires you to swap out items once a monster has been spotted. As one wit put it, "What, there's no duct tape in the future?"

More dark-future thrills were to be had with Eidos' reworked *Deus Ex: Clan Wars*, now called *Snowblind* (the *Deus Ex* brand has been much developed as of late, thanks to poor sales of *Deus Ex: Invisible War*), and its war-torn multiplayer environments impressed, particularly the use of shield generators to block enemy tanks and bots. Digital Extremes joined the party with the ambitious *Pariah*, the third game this year by

#### KNOW THINE ROLE

Turning to less explosive matters, it's a well-documented fact the Xbox suffers from a dearth of RPGs—quality or otherwise. While prior E3s demonstrated a situation suggesting that Xbox—this generation at least—will unlikely ever be the RPG place to be, what is on the way looks quite good.

Long awaited and eagerly anticipated, *True Fantasy Live Online* was nowhere to be found, leaving a few distressed fans

## OF BOOTHS AND BABES

Such a sad, Sisyphean cycle as publishers' booths get bigger, brasier, and more cacophonous each year, so too do the throngs of "babes" hired to "man" them. Ask any scantly spandex-clad young lady at the show what her interests are, and odds are she'll tell you—a voice that suggests she's got a little red dot on her forehead—"guys who like videogames." It's common to hear showgoers joke that the quality of a forthcoming game is directly proportional to the number of lovely lasses hired solely to sing its praises. Or, at the very least, repeatedly have their pictures taken arm in sweaty amripit with the unwashed hordes who slip through the best security the Los Angeles Convention Center has to offer.

And yet, perhaps not surprisingly, the oldest trick in the book seems to retain its efficacy. The single biggest line we saw at E3 was for adult actress Tera Patrick, who showed up at Eidos' booth to sign autographs promoting her new game, *Backyard Wrestling 2*. Now here's our question: Where on Earth can we find thousands of awkward, largely misshapen young women ogling hundreds of the most attractive men on the planet? Best answer wins a Coke and a smile.





## FABLE

As the star in Peter Molyneux's choose-your-own-adventure RPG *Fable*, you can beat down evil with a frying pan if you wish, or you might manipulate real estate prices so as to become the biggest land baron this fantasy world has ever seen. Or even build your hero into a powerful warrior, a skilled archer, or a wielder of the arcane arts. It's wholly up to you, and at E3, Microsoft let you play all of them, of both the good and bad variety, and stomp virtual mudholes in skeletons. The best RPG ever? A definite maybe.

**E**  
expo



fretting whether Factor 5's ambitious adventurer might be abandoned (à la *Psychonauts* and the next *Oddworld* game). This left Microsoft's massively multiplayer spotlight shining on Sigt Games' *Vanguard: Sage of Heroes*. Immaculately detailed, it's already more than promising on the pretty graphics front—it's also only coming to the PC. But given Microsoft's enthusiasm for its XNA development toolset, an Xbox edition seems like a pretty safe bet.

Still, gamers with a penchant for such swords and sorcery fare, however, can expect EA's trademark infusion of quality—if not originality—into the genre when *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age* ships this winter. Comparisons to the *Final Fantasy*



## DIESEL POWERED

Hunky actor Vin "Riddick" Diesel showed up at E3, visiting the Vivendi Universal booth, taping his new game *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay*, and generally clogging traffic while making young girls and barely dressed booth women swoon with his smooth good looks. He's dreamy!

## \*E3 SELECT No.3

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION // DEVELOPER: ID/VICARIOUS VISIONS  
PLAYERS: 1-4 // LIVE: YES // RELEASE: WINTER 2004



## DOOM 3

While the PC build of *Doom 3* was nowhere to be found in playable form (the Id team apparently spent the whole of E3 working on finishing it up for a June release), the Xbox version was up, running, and every bit as intense as we've come to expect. Minor instances of slowdown aside (which Xbox Nation fully expects to be ironed out by release), the game looked and played great, with

smooth controls and killer graphics. Some small gameplay details—mostly related to flashlight usage—emerged, but more impressive was the announcement that players will be able to play cooperatively via Xbox Live—an Xbox exclusive. Which means that you'll be able to cringe, cover, and swap expletives with friends from around the world. What more could you ask for?



# E expo

## ELECTRONIC ARTS

→ Electronic Arts' announcement of Live support at the Microsoft press conference was backed with perhaps the most bankable lineup of the show. Strengthening its already near-total dominance of the best-seller lists were Xbox iterations of *GoldenEye 2: Rogue Agent*, *Battlefield: Modern Combat*, *Need for Speed Underground 2*, *Lord of the Rings: The Third Age*, *Def Jam Fight for New York*, *Burnout 3*, and *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect*. The first of its now Live-enabled sports franchises, *NCAA Football*, is due in July.



NBA LIVE 2005

## IT'S ALL GREEK

Korea's BinaryCraft describes its new game Xango thus: "A new-concept sports dance game. 1P is the leader in couple dance, he or she inputs next 'step command' for dance motions, like as command input system of fighting games. Follower, 2P press the same 'step command' right after." Awesome.



BATTLEFIELD: MODERN COMBAT



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2



## E3 SELECT No.2

PUBLISHER: UBISOFT  
PLAYERS: 1 // LIVE: YES

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL  
RELEASE: 10.10.10



## SPLINTER CELL 3

→ To be honest, we had a few misgivings before going in to see *Splinter Cell 3*. After releasing two games in only a year and change, could Ubisoft really have anything earth-shattering up its sleeve? Color us very impressed. Though shown only on PC, the game boasted some of the most stunningly realistic environments and effects we've ever seen in a game (the rain was particularly impressive) and

a slew of new moves to boot. At one point during the demonstration, our hero crept up to a Japanese screen, the silhouette of a man on the other side dancing across it. To the shock of the crowd, Fisher then tore into the screen and grabbed the man by the neck—all in one smooth, subtle motion—and snapped it. Makes you think twice about planting a dirty bomb, dunnit?

series (X, specifically) and *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* are not unwarranted—combat is turn-based, and players will have the option to embark on side quests depending on which alignment they choose to play as.

As previously revealed in the June issue of *XBN*, *Jade Empire* is coming along in splendid style. New playable levels on the show floor demonstrated new enemies and environs, optional shooting sections were revealed pitting the players Dragonfly vehicle against swarms of insect-like foes, and the combat's been punched up nicely. The bad news? Empire's release has slipped into spring of 2005, shortly after the debut of the sequel to LucasArts' own *Knights of the*

## TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE





STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC 2

**Old Republic.** The Sith Lords was also playable on the show floor; not surprisingly, it looks similar to and seems likely to play similarly to BioWare's sleeper hit. Any gameplay additions aside (the possibility of losing morally opposed NPCs from one's party is one nice touch), only time will tell whether newcomer Obsidian Entertainment will be able to surpass BioWare's masterful blend of moral dilemmas and unerring fan service or simply deliver more of the same. And, of course, **Fable** remains the greatest RPG ever until proven otherwise.

#### OH NO!

As the Who once quipped, "You can't always get higher just because you aspire," and E3

certainly held its share of disappointing Xbox games. While hope springs eternal, titles such as Fidus' gritty online shooter **2 to Life** and Sega's **Spikewor: Battle Street** fell short of expectations, lagging behind their Xbox brethren in terms of either thrills or graphical quality. Indeed, **Life** seemed overly dark—even for a game centered on an urban setting and thematically concentrated on cops versus thugs—and not very interesting when Xbox's abundance of online first- and third-person shooters is taken into account. **Battle Street**, in turn, seemed more suitable for the Sega Dreamcast; its visuals are a generation behind the times, and while the online beatings fueled by four-player fistfights seemed fine, the game was

#### FUN WITH DEMOS...

The journalists at *Xbox Nation* have trained for years to ask probing, detailed questions during game demos, questions such as "My God, are you sure this is a real game?" "At what point do you get to either punch Adolf Hitler in the stomach or battle Hitlerbots?" and "Can you write this preview for us while we eat these snack treats?"

SHANE KIM, GENERAL MANAGER  
MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS



#### SPEAKING MICROSOFTLY WITH SHANE KIM.

On why Microsoft dropped *Oddworld: Stranger and Psychonauts*:

We took a very hard look at our portfolio and we had to start to focus on those games that could really break through and make an impact. And so at the end of the day, that's what we chose to re-focus on other games that we had to re-focus on other games.

On Xbox 2:

We haven't confirmed anything about a new system; what you're seeing at the show is a commitment to the current generation.

On *Oddworld: Game Studios'* new first-party strategy:

We have the core game, but what we need to do, and what we'll continue to do, is put more effort into broadening that market. I think you're going to see a lot more from the studio and the company to target that broader market. It's not just a matter of getting THQ to do more of their games on the system, it's really got to be a conscious effort.



#### MISSING IN ACTION

→ Some much-hyped Xbox games went missing in action at this year's E3. Among the ultra-high-profile but notably absent titles were **Dark Sector**, the "first" announced title for Xbox Next; Artoon's sequel **Blink: The Time Sweeper**; **It**, the slick and psychic-combat-based **Phantom Dust** from Microsoft Studios Japan; and the massively multiplayer online role-playing game **True Fantasy Live Online**. No outright explanation was given for these games' absences, save for Digital Extremes' **Sector**, which is rightly being held until the next iteration of Xbox rears its head.

Quirky Microsoft castaways **Psychonauts** and **Oddworld: Stranger** were also conspicuously off the radar at E3. These titles were homeless at E3, as their respective developers Double Fine Studios and Oddworld inhabitants shopped the games to prospective publishers. Shane Kim, the recently appointed general manager of Microsoft Game Studios, says he hopes both titles find their way to Xbox, stating that they'd been dropped because they didn't fit into Microsoft's overall publishing plan. For the missing, it's hoped they will again show up, perhaps first at next year's show and definitely on Xbox.

# E expo



## GUNGRIFFON

The successor to a severely underappreciated (and selling) PlayStation 2 launch title, *GunGriffon*—developed by Game Arts and to be published by Tecmo—features fast-paced land and airborne action from both the first- and third-person perspectives. Xbox Live play should hopefully open up this worthwhile mechfest to a whole new audience.

hamstrung by its decidedly short length and limited single-player appeal.

Other offerings, such as Majesco's futuristic shooter *Advent Rising* and Vivendi Universal's *StarCraft: Ghost*, seemingly suffered as a result of the hype machine that had built them. While it's most likely that both *Ghost* and *Rising* will be fine third-person adventures, the games neither provided Xbox-shattering thrills nor lived up to their admittedly overblown expectations. These were blips, though; thankfully, the disappointments were few and far between.

## THE IDEA FACTORY

Far more encouraging than the occasional letdown was a fresh crop of original ideas. So when your friends complain about the abundance of sequels flooding the shelves in 2004, pull out your battered (but beloved) copy of XBN and tell them this: E3 featured no less than 20 all-new, prequel-less games—some even with the potential to flower into future franchises. But ponder this for a moment: What good is new intellectual property with new worlds, new characters, and new stories without the promise of



innovation and originality?

While most of these new titles looked (and played) like run-of-the-mill genre rehashes, others had the style, the flair, or simply the soul to excite and quite possibly change the industry. One such game is Pandemic's

**Destroy All Humans!** (see the preview on page 73), a hilarious, geek-smart take on alien-abduction fantasy. Criterion, maker of the Burnout series, also debuted its first-person shooter **Black**, which paused to re-examine the real star of an FPS genre, while Tecmo's signing of Game Arts' mech shooter **GunGriffon** (complete with Xbox Live play) seems an excellent acquisition.

The most interesting aspect of new intellectual properties is their unproven qualities. Will Crystal Dynamics' sci-fi FPS **Snowblind** be a megahit on Xbox Live, or will it simply suck and disappear? Will anyone still care about Midway's **Area 51** this time next year when the company announces **Area 52**? And what of **True Fantasy Live Online**, **Perfect Dark Zero**, and **Xbox Next**? Only XBN knows, and its members are not telling... //

## SMELLS LIKE...

XBNers' favorite gross E3 story: A show-floor model was heard complaining about being bodily on the side of her right arm smelling. When questioned as to why, she pointed to the floor several thousand sweaty nerds she had hugged while posing for pictures.

# \*E3 SELECT No.1

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT  
PLAYERS: 1-16

DEVELOPER: BUNGIE  
LIVE: YES  
RELEASE: 11/09/04



## HALO 2

Ah, the Zanzibar beach in the not-too-distant future: the sand, the surf, the slaughter. All were gorgeous in *Halo 2*'s multiplayer demonstration at E3. Ten players a pop (the game supports 16), played the much-hyped game, fighting it out as either Covenant Elites or Spartans. The goal, of course, was to capture the enemy's flag, but this generally took a back seat to exploration, deadly

vehicular test drives, and wholesale slaughter. Among the highlights of the fully playable game were destructible vehicles, an ass-kicking Covenant Energy Sword allowing for one-hit kills, and interactive environments (in this case, a gate could be lowered to allow vehicles into an enemy fortress). After this brief taste of sweetness, it was agreed that November 9 simply cannot come soon enough.

# RED DEAD REVOLVER

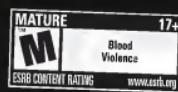
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## TRENDSPOTTING

### Trends we like, and some we don't

Here's Trendspotting, your handy guide to what's hot—and what's not—in games today. From new ideas and

technologies to misguided marketing and everything in between, Xbox Nation separates the cream from the crap.



#### 20, 20, Dol!

Gamers like pipeline. And the best grueling analysis comes closest to the goal of all days. And strangely enough, Xbox has taken the place to revisit them, thanks to the efforts of Microsoft. Coming up: Doom 3, which may think it's 40 years, but still isn't holding up. 7.75/10 —Sergio

#### Bald Be Beautiful

Cos, there are some a while left to learn, chosen sculps in games these days. Thanks to Radlick, Agent 47, some telepathic twins (see page 46), and others, this harmless baldness trend ensures that the words "bare," "bald," and "bottom" are safe once again.



#### Hard Time

If XNA's solid past ever catches up with it, we'll all be well prepared for life on the inside. *The Chronicles of Radlick: The Survivalist, The Great Escape, and the Great Reincarnation* is due in 2007 and will have plenty of insight into life, love, and the barter system—behind bars.



#### Hip-Happened

Not unlike any other facet of popular culture, hip-hop has officially invaded the world of videogames. EA has born the first game factory that can't be stopped. It's just 12 months in the next part of the film, and we're already looking forward to the very last of the Lethal Threats as we shrink in our Tilik shirts.



#### The Long Wait...

All virtuous aside, this is getting ridiculous. Will we ever tire of waiting for Doom 3? Hell no. We'll be waiting 2 to 3 years for it by 2010. And we'll wait every time it's delayed. And it's not even Ninja Gaiden 2, and it's taking forever to do.



## XPANSION: GET MORE FROM YOUR XBOX



If history has taught game developers any lesson, it's this: Don't abandon a platform just because new hardware comes along. As cool as

Doom 3 would look on the next Xbox—whenever it's released—for more people will own the original Xbox at that point, and a larger installed base almost guarantees better game sales.

The big problems: How do you push the current Xbox hardware enough to make a quality conversion of the game—remember SNES Doom? And how do you convince the developer to rewrite a finished game for a very different platform?

Microsoft's answer: XNA (supposedly an abbreviation for Cross-platform Next-generation Architecture), a set of game-development tools designed to unify the Xbox, PC, and Xbox Next platforms under a single framework. The goal is to make game development easier by reducing the amount of

proprietary code developers have to write.

For now, Xbox developers will gain access to new effects and animation tools originally developed for Windows, while PC developers will be able to create games using Xbox Live tools—potentially increasing the number of friends you can play against online. Soon thereafter, Microsoft promises to unify the controller standards for Xbox and PC; offer connectivity (ahem) with future Windows Mobile game devices, and ensure that future tools used for PC, Xbox, and Xbox Next development are the same.

Each of these moves is designed to give developers a stark choice: Develop for Sony's three totally different architectures (PS2, PSP, PS3) or make games that run smoothly on PCs, Xboxes, and future Microsoft portable devices. Current Xbox owners will benefit from superior PC ports. Future Xbox owners will likely benefit from simultaneous cross-platform releases, bigger Live communities, and possibly less-expensive games as well. /

Jeremy Horwitz

### THREE XNA DEMOS:

Microsoft's first three visual examples of XNA suggest what sorts of graphical tricks upcoming Xbox and Xbox Next games will include.

**Craft:** Pseudo Interactive's futuristic car-crash demo displayed real-time geometry deformation with a high polygon model of a Saab 9-7X supercar with great lighting and impressive shading.



body models, depth of field blurring, bloom shading, and other visual effects to demonstrate the power of XNA special effects and animation tools.



**Xenomorph:** This surprisingly effective geometry transformation and shader demo from High Voltage showed flawless transformations from monster to monster, with photo-realistic fur, scales, exoskeletons, and claws smoothly emerging, retracting, morphing, and more—in real time.



**Film noir:** Microsoft Advanced Technology Group's demo used outrageously detailed 3D human



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GENIUS AT PLAY

# CALENDAR: JULY 2004

## MORE STUFF, LESS FLUFF

### FORGET-ME-NOTS:

**07.04.04**

It's your right to spend more money on fireworks than groceries this week. It's in the Constitution.

**07.15.04**

Has it really been one whole year? Thank the maker, and then play through Knights of the Old Republic all over again.

**07.17.04**

It was 34 years ago that Ralph Baer demonstrated the affectionately named "brown box" to executives at Magnavox, who made the fateful decision to build the first console: the Odyssey. We've come a pretty long way from colored plastic screen overlays since then.

**07.05 MONDAY**

**COMBAT ELITE: WWII**

PUBLISHER: Accolade // DEVELOPER: BattleBorn Ent.



After one too many first-person WWII-themed shooters, it's about time for a change of perspective. Trigger fingers everywhere are itching for the drop into war-torn, isometrically rendered Europe. Forty historically themed battles can be fought in this game, which uses the tried-and-true Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance engine. Sadly, Xbox Live support is a no go.

**07.09 FRIDAY**

**METALLICA: ROMEKIND OF MONSTER**

PUBLISHER: THEATRICAL // STUDIO: IFC Films



This critically acclaimed film initially began as a project to document the recording of Metallica's most recent album—*St. Anger*—but captured so much more as the band struggled to rise from one of its lowest points. *Monster* is scheduled for release in San Francisco and NYC only so for fans, this can mean only one thing: road trip, man.

**07.17 SATURDAY**

**TRUE FANTASY LIVE**

PUBLISHER: Microsoft // DEVELOPER: Level 5



A July ship date is, of course, truly just a fantasy, but our desire for this massively multiplayer online role-playing game is 100 percent real. From our experiences playing PSO and another game involving fantasy (and the number 11), our lonely nights huddled in dark rooms in front of the computer suddenly seem to have some sense of...purpose?

**07.06 TUESDAY**

**THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT**

FORMAT: DVD // STUDIO: WARNER HOME VIDEO



Remember Jurassic Park's Dr. Ian Malcolm, blathering on about chaos theory? That's the gist of *The Butterfly Effect*, in which Ashton Kutcher undergoes the worst case scenario in a series of intensely disturbing trips back to his youth. A warning for the squeamish: Any romantic notions of reliving your childhood may well be dashed.

**07.13 TUESDAY**

**NCAA FOOTBALL 2005**

PUBLISHER: EA // DEVELOPER: EA Tiburon



Should this prove to be one of the first EA Sports Live-enabled titles, even the new Home Field Advantage system (which simulates over 100,000 dazed and confused college football fans packed in a stadium) won't be as loud as the roar heard 'cross the land. Finally, onscreen players won't be the only ones needing to check their composure before a play.

**07.23 FRIDAY**

**CAT WOMAN**

PUBLISHER: EA // DEVELOPER: EA UK



Got milk? The latest comic turned simultaneous movie and videogame release stiffs us much of Halle Berry...as can possibly fit into sexy black pleather. Could this perfect subject matter lead to an equally fine game? Possibly—it's in the hands of the same team that spun gaming gold from the Harry Potter license.

**07.07 WEDNESDAY**

**KING ARTHUR**

FORMAT: THEATRICAL // STUDIO: TOUCHSTONE



Cock an eyebrow if you must at the prospect of this more historical accounting of what most consider to be the stuff of fantasy legend. But sprawling hand-to-hand clashes have yet to go out of style, and even the most cynical moviegoers can look forward to drop-dead-hottie du jour Kiera "Don't call me Natalie Portman" Knightley as Guinevere.

**07.16 FRIDAY**

**I, ROBOT**

FORMAT: THEATRICAL // STUDIO: 20th Century Fox



Long before *The Terminator* and *The Matrix* ruled humanity with their steely grips, Isaac Asimov published a thought-provoking series of short stories about a future filled with robots trusted by all. While Will Smith's acting makes us cautious, that Alex Proyas (*Dark City*; *The Crow*) is directing gets us all giddy. Also, the futuristic Audi should have X-Boxers praying for a tie-in with PGR2.

**07.30 FRIDAY**

**THUNDERBIRDS**

FORMAT: Theatrical // STUDIO: Universal Pictures



5...4...3...2...1... Thunderbirds are go! No, really—the campy sci-fi series from the '60s done with puppets comes to the silver screen. Bill Paxton stars as Jeff Tracy, head of International Rescue, squaring off against arch nemesis The Hood, played by Ben Kingsley. Watching reruns on TechTV, we can't help but wonder: retro cool or just incredibly lame?

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# Sudeki



it's good to play together

[xbox.com/sudeki](http://xbox.com/sudeki)



Violence  
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# TOP 10: XBOX BEST-SELLERS (AS OF APR. 2004)

**ONE****EA Sports Fight Night 2004**

Live: No Release: 04/04 Score: Nine  
What we said: "Fight Night represents a big step forward for an all-but-stagnant genre."

**TWO****Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow**

Live: Yes Release: 03/04 Score: Nine  
What we said: "Tomorrow is, without a doubt, the best pure stealth-action game today."

**THREE****NBA Ballers**

Live: No Release: 03/04 Score: Nine  
What we said: "...a must-have for any basketball fan on the planet."

**FOUR**

**Hitman: Contracts**  
Live: No  
Release: 03/04  
Score: Six  
What we said:  
"Contracts may have its problems, but looks isn't one of them."

**FIVE**

**ESPN MLB**  
Live: Yes  
Release: 03/04  
Score: Five  
What we said: "This year's *MLB* seems less polished...and its graphics don't pack the punch they used to."

**SIX**

**Ninja Gaiden**  
Live: No  
Release: 03/04  
Score: Nine  
What we said: "If *Gaiden* isn't the 'perfect' action game, it's pretty damn close."

**SEVEN**

**MVP Baseball 2004**  
Live: No  
Release: 03/04  
Score: Nine  
What we said: "...*MVP* offers fantastic action...and a base-ball engine tuned to perfection."

**EIGHT**

**TOCA Race Driver 2**  
Live: Yes  
Release: 04/04  
Score: Eight  
What we said: "...it's clear that the game is a must-buy for any racing fanatic."

**NINE**

**Yu-Gi-Oh!**  
Live: No  
Release: 04/04  
Score: Four  
What we said: "Destiny is a poor use of money that could've gone toward more Yu-Gi-Oh! cards."

**TEN**

**Halo**  
Live: No  
Release: 11/01  
Score: Ten  
What we said: "Halo is, in a word, insanely great. Do it up."

**FAME...OR SHAME?****TOP 10 U.K.**

Codes: *TOCA 2* takes the pole position—wheelie!

**1 TOCA RACE DRIVER 2**

Racy, but not that kind of racy.

**2 SPLINTER CELL PT**

C'mon...what's in the box?

**3 MANHUNT**

Highlight? Lowlifes.

**4 UNREAL II: THE AWAKENING**

We'd rather get the extra hour of sleep.

**5 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY**

Rugby: It's tougher than you.

**6 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING**

Batmobile not included.

**7 GTA: DOUBLE PACK**

Thugs, drugs, and (just a few) bugs.

**8 SONIC HEROES**

Speed kills, but what about heroic antics?

**9 MAFIA**

Made for men, by men, about (made) men.

**10 HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED**

Time for the next rung on the ladder...

**TOP 10 JAPAN**

This month, Ninja Gaiden's Ryu defends his throne...

**1 NINJA GAIDEN**

No Japanese support for Xbox, eh?

**2 SHIKOGAMI NO SHIRO II**

Shooting never goes out of style.

**3 DEAD OR ALIVE 3**

Silicon sells.

**4 GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER**

Best played on a Saturday night.

**5 COUNTER-STRIKE**

Over the Counter? Not yet, apparently.

**6 PUYO POP FEVER**

The colors...so pretty.

**7 DRONEZ**

Look—the competition's not that stiff, OK?

**8 DOA: XTREME BEACH VOLLEYBALL**

Surf, sand, and fun in the sun. And lotion.

**9 AMPED 2**

Shreddin' has international appeal.

**10 PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2**

Cause you're never going to own a Porsche.

Numbers courtesy of Media Create (m-csate.com)



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MEXICO



## WORLDWIDE LIVE

The virus is spreading

Xbox Live is already up and running in the three original territories—the United States, Europe, and Japan), but this spring saw a live service sprout up in many smaller markets. Microsoft has finished setting up its infrastructure to deliver Live in Mexico, New Zealand (which previously had to hitch off of Australia's Live service), and other countries. Now it's just on when that unfamiliar Nigerian in contest #1 will be able to hook up and play online yet, though.

## GET FUNKY

No GameCube required. Zoanami, the British studio founded by GoldenEye (Nintendo 64) director Martin Hollis, has become famous mostly for the rumors swirling around its secret projects for GameCube. Imagine everyone's surprise when its first game announcement hit—*Rhythmguitar*, action game from Funkytilla, and it's available to as many platforms as Zoanami can find a publisher for. A song-building puzzler with some resemblance to Sony's Frequency, Funkytilla is still looking for money to back it up with promotion and music licensing, so don't expect to see it arriving too soon.

DENMARK



## A YEAR TO KILL

No just kidding

Ninian's developer IO Interactive has been quiet by its publisher, Eidos, but that doesn't mean the Danish studio is slacking off. IO is hard at work on a sequel to *Freedom Fighter* (to be published by Eidos sometime in the future) and a fourth *Hitman*, slated to arrive just a year after the recent release of *Contracts*. Eidos has reportedly signed up a new developer, Blood Money, so that may be what winds up on the next sequel's cover, and particularly interesting rumors hint that it may feature online play.

# LONDON CALLING: XBOX IN THE U.K.



**Andy Hartup**  
News Editor  
**XBM**

the Sunday Times Rich List, have been counting their cash pound by pound instead of bringing quality games to Xbox, while other up-and-coming companies continue to make big names for themselves. Just looking at the efforts of BioWare, DICE, and

Let's face it: April and May are all about the Electronic Entertainment Expo. There's no escaping the wonderful buzz of anticipation as details of the games that will occupy our existences for the next 12 months start to seep out of the woodwork. However, as XBN provides the finest E3 coverage available, you probably don't need a U.K. journalist speculating on the great announcements of the show...

Instead, it's my responsibility to inform you that other events occur within this couple of months that have absolutely nothing to do with E3. Chris Stamper and his family have been exposed as one of the country's wealthiest, weighing in with a fortune of just over £80 million.

Undoubtedly, the owners of legendary U.K. developer Rare, who are now No. 495 on

Pandemic over the past year leads us to believe that Xbox is the console of choice for developers. So why the hell can't Rare be bothered to knock out some decent games? We all know that Conker and Kameo are just around the corner, but these aren't the massive titles that should be selling Xbox.

Another U.K. developer that seems to be letting the side down is Lionhead. Peter Molyneux has been hailed a gaming genius and is always rolled out at Microsoft's key press conferences. However, all it seems to be a little matter-of-fact if none of his studios can knock out a single game in three years. Admittedly, *Fable* should be hitting stores in September/October, but by now it's looking a little ordinary. Most of the ideas in it, considered revolutionary at the time of their conception, are now far less impressive. Since *Xbox* launched, we've experienced *Deus Ex: Invisible War*, *KOTOR*, and *GTA Double Pack*—all of which steal the limelight from Fable's "go anywhere, do anything" boasts.

Game development is a skilled art, and it's absolutely necessary that programmers and artists manage to achieve a state as close to perfection as possible. However, it's also about timing, and when the hype becomes more and more hollow by the day, this is when gamers lose patience and interest in the product. We'd love to see Fable and BC on Xbox, even with the multiplayer removed, but right now we doff our collective bowlers to Tecmo, DICE, and BioWare: the developers of the moment.



TAIWAN

**CHIPPED IN**

**What's a "future product executive?"** Those elusive "future Xbox products and services" have popped up in another announcement. This time, Microsoft has lined up Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company to produce "system-on-chip" solutions for its next game console, combining multiple components on one chip produced with the same kind of 65-nanometer manufacturing process that will create the Cell chip for Sony's next playStation. Whenever it decides to show itself, whatever it decides to have inside, the next Xbox will have some serious silicon inside.

**TRUE FANTASY LATE ONLINE**

**Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow** Steel 5's MMORPG *True Fantasy Live Online* recently suffered another delay, pushing its planned beta test to an unannounced date. Testers in Japan were originally supposed to get their hands on the game this summer—in time for a fall retail release—but now the new beta date won't be announced until June. The beta's delay hasn't yet had an official effect on the final game's release date, but we'll see what develops this summer. In related news, rumors of *TFLD* for PC are just hot air; it's not going anywhere but Xbox.

DRAFT

**ARCADIA**

**Twitter favorites find a niche** Xbox is suddenly playing host to a wave of arcade ports in Japan, and Microsoft is preparing for their arrival with a major promotional campaign. *Shakugan no Shiro II*, *Gilty Gear XX*, *Samurai Metal Slug 3*, *SVC Chaos*, and *Popcorn* hit the Japanese Xbox in rapid succession this spring. They'll be accompanied by special editions with extra collectibles. Microsoft will also offer Xbox Live scoreboards and downloadable content for some of the games. Check out [www.xbox.com/jp/en/games](http://www.xbox.com/jp/en/games) to play *Shakugan no Shiro*. Besides, witness other bits of marketing oddity, and lament the fact that only the SNK games will be coming Stateside.

**TOKYO TRIBE: XBOX IN JAPAN**

Many Americans have applauded Tecmo for including both Japanese and English language options in *Ninja Gaiden*. If players are so inclined, they can let cut-scenes unfold in Japanese with English subtitles. But for Japanese Xbox owners, playing new Xbox titles in their native language is the exception, not the rule. Yes, most new Xbox releases in Japan are presented completely in English.

Microsoft's World Collection series is to blame. Introduced last summer to help stimulate the company's flailing Japanese release schedule, World Collection brings popular Western games to store shelves at a discount price of 4,800 yen (\$43). The catch? The games do not undergo any sort of localization.

Naturally, the World Collection series is populated with sports and action-heavy games like *Waveboarding Unleashed* and *Counter-Strike* and thus require little English knowledge. But as the hordes of private English teachers in Japan will tell you, despite 10 years of compulsory English classes, few Japanese retain enough English to carry on even a basic conversation, let alone know enough to understand mission objectives in *The Simpsons: Hit & Run*.

EXCERPT

**31/40**

SCORE

Grabbed by the Ghoulsies earned high marks with *Famitsu Weekly*.

The World Collection series has become a bit of a double-edged katana for Xbox. The series has helped bring more vitality and quality to the Japanese Xbox lineup—if handled properly, the World Collection brand could gain the notoriety with the increasing number of Japanese interested in Western games. But on the flip side, Japanese gamers do not get the same gameplay experience English speakers receive. Imagine playing a World Collection title such as *Outlaw Volleyball*. The American player gets raunchy gameplay but with tongue-in-cheek commentary. The Japanese just get raunchy.

Luckily for Microsoft, the World Collection series isn't yet synonymous with "confusing foreign games." The series offers some great Western-developed titles at a low price, and there are plenty of Japanese willing and eager to learn English, even through videogames. But for the sake of English-speaking foreigners living in Japan, let's hope these gamers take their English lessons from the players in *Links 2004* rather than *Outlaw Golf*'s strippers.



**Ryan Payton**  
Writer  
*Tokyo, Japan*

"It's probably not a good idea to work on a game you're not interested in..."



# POP QUIZ

We name their influences. They tell us if we're right...

XBN shows a baker's half-dozen games to Toby Gard, the creator of *Galleon* and some old gal named Lara Croft...

## ABOUT: POP QUIZ

Each month, XBN pops the quiz on an Xbox game designer. We show our guest a series of screenshots and let him or her identify the game. We then ask them to comment on that game's relevance—if there is any—to their own work. By discussing various external influences, we hope to gain insight into their own creative processes.



**1** ICO  
SCEA PS2

**TG:** Ico I love that game. So good. Obviously, when that came out, there was a bit of a fear for us because it was the first game that did a proper secondary character running around. It was very similar to what we were aiming for, and it's blindingly well done.

**XBN:** It also mixes action and adventure,

without overcompensating for either. The combat is a necessary part of it, but it's certainly not first and foremost...

**TG:** No, it's not. It's a very similar type of thing; it's brilliant, and I think it's one of the few games that you can consider a work of art, essentially. It's more an art experience than just a simple game. I think it's much more than that, in terms of scope. It's a much simpler game than, say, *Galleon*, which goes a lot further but I think in its simplicity, it's perfect. I'm a huge fan of it. I consider it one of the best games I've ever played.

**XBN:** We also chose *Ico* because of the emotional resonance the player finds shepherding Yorda through dangerous situations, which is similar to *Galleon*.

**TG:** Yeah, we do. Yeah, it's a great thing, because it's a character you really come to care for, but amazingly, they do all of that and they have virtually no speech; there's

virtually nothing in it apart from mixing around with the character. It's just comfortable. It's awesome—I know you're not allowed to say that word anymore, are you? It's too '90s now, [laughs].



**2** The Mark of Kri  
SCEA PS2

**TG:** Oh wow. These are some great choices of games. *Mark of Kri*—I love that one. That's

another of my favorites; I picked it up finally, and yeah, it's fantastic. I think it's super-underrated, really.

**XBN:** Besides the Disney aesthetic, *Kr* features a very eloquent solution to fighting multiple opponents. While it isn't the most robust aspect of *Galleon*, it's something you considered carefully...

**TG:** I don't think people realize just how much there is—how every level essentially changes the gameplay. It's something we don't do to the same extent in *Galleon*. In *Mark of Kr*, you get your standard fighting, then you get your sniping, then you do your sneaking level, and then you get to kind of mix it all up, and you have your insane combat run at the end. But they really did focus on that combat a lot more than we did. Our game is more puzzles and story, while I think *Mark of Kr* is all about combat, and it does it superbly well with a great fighting engine.

designed her to be as inextricable as possible, really, so that she was sort of like something you couldn't really understand or get to know or anything like that. I think it would be much more interesting to get inside her head. That would be what I would be interested in.



#### 4 Pirates of the Caribbean

Bethesda Softworks PC/PS2/XB

**TG:** Oh yeah, that's *Pirates of the Caribbean*. I haven't actually played it, to be honest with you, but I was a big fan of their *Red Guard* when that came out. That was a bit of a scare for us because it was during the beginning of *Galleon*'s development, and it's kind of a bit similar, but it was really good, and it was super-underappreciated back then.

**XBN:** Bethesda made *Pirates of the Caribbean* as *Sea Dogs*, but it became *Pirates of the Caribbean*—a lesson, maybe, in what you can do with a license?

**TG:** The *Pirates of the Caribbean* license was considered with *Galleon*, but not in any serious way; it didn't really get anywhere.

**XBN:** Was it something you thought of or something they approached you about?

**TG:** Well, yeah, they approached us actually, but the reality is that it would have taken a dramatic change to the main character and the game, being totally about story and the character base. It was a bit of a difficult decision because it would have gotten us out of our financial difficulties, no doubt. [laughs]



#### 5 Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

Ubisoft PC/GC/PS2/XB

**TG:** [laughing] And, of course, who could possibly be but him?

**XBN:** Like *Galleon*'s Captain Rhamha, he's very nimble, and he's got a sword...

**TG:** On paper, I think they read like they're exactly the same essentially—Prince of Persia and *Galleon*—it seems to me. They even have the girl that follows you around. I thought that Prince was astonishingly beautiful as well, and they really have taken

that style of platforming to a completely new level with the number of moves you have at your disposal. The differences really are how free-form you can be. The thing with Prince is you have to do exactly what you're supposed to do in the room, and you just basically go through it that way. There are probably a few places that you can go that are off the beaten track, but you know that they've been put there deliberately. The whole point of *Galleon* was to try to get to a situation where you're more like a real climber in real life. You look at the space ahead of you and decide on the route you're going to try—basically, you use your skills to go that way. It's not really so much about the way the designer decided you're going to go.

#### ABOUT: TOBY GARD

Toby Gard is best known as the man who created *Lady Lara Croft*—star of *Elder*—and variable *Rock Raiders*. He started his career with UK-based Core Design, cutting his teeth on the derivative *BC Racers*. Gard recently put the wraps on the long-awaited *Galleon*—a US publisher for the game yet to be announced.

#### ABOUT: CONFOUNDING FACTOR

Based in Bristol, UK, Confounding Factor was founded by Toby Gard after his departure from Core Design. Dedicated solely to the creation and completion of *Galleon*, Confounding Factor's team size has ranged in the last few years from as many as 20 to as few as eight. Currently, the developer has no announced plans for its next project.

#### 3 Tomb Raider: Angel of Darkness

Eidos PC/PS2

**TG:** [laughing] I recognize that game I don't, actually. Which one is it? Ten, 11, or 12?

**XBN:** It's darker and grittier...

**TG:** Is that *Angel of Darkness*?

**XBN:** That is correct.

**TG:** Right on. I did play it a little bit, to see what it was like.

**XBN:** Many people found it very difficult to get past even the first level...

**TG:** The first Paris b/c. Was it Paris? Something like that. Yeah, I didn't get past that; I wasn't that keen. I have to say [laughs]. I think it's strange to take her out of her proper surroundings, and I didn't think she looked very good in jeans. Denim doesn't do her; she looks more like an ordinary person. It's like having Batman run around wearing his slacks and comfy trousers; it doesn't work. He's got to be wearing his suit.

**XBN:** Would you admit to still having a personal attachment to the *Lara*?

**TG:** To an extent—well, not hugely. I really haven't played all of the ones in between, but it's interesting to see what's going on with the movies and these other kinds of things.

**XBN:** If you were asked to come back and direct the series, what sort of changes do you think you would like to make?

**TG:** I think the thing that interests me is to find out what's going on behind her personality, really. That's the thing that intrigues me most about the character, because when I made the character, I sort of



#### 6 BC Racers

Core Design 3DO/PC/Sega 32X

**TG:** Oh, man. How gross is that? Look at the graphics on that. Well, it wasn't my idea.

Chuck Rock was Core's mascot, and they went, "We really need to have Chuck Rock and son of Chuck in essentially a *Mario Kart*—we'll just rip off *Mario Kart*." That was the idea.

So basically, they go, "You're gonna do this now; this is your job." I didn't know what I was doing; it was the first thing I ever worked on, a hell of a learning experience.

**XBN:** What was the most useful thing you took away from this experience?

**TG:** It's probably not a good idea to work on a game you're not interested in if you're going to have any form of control over it, because you'll make a really bad job of it.



#### 7 Sid Meier's Pirates!

Microprose Macintosh/PC

**TG:** I don't know if I know what that is.

**XBN:** It's *Sid Meier's Pirates!*, which debuted in the early 1980s...

**TG:** I really don't know anything about it; I really didn't research those Pirate games...

**XBN:** We didn't think so, actually; we were just trying to be cute. //

# XBOX NEXT RUMOR MILL



As Microsoft's next console comes closer to its public debut, the world's buzzing about its possible features. XBN's favorite rumors, in no particular order, are the following:



#### The Rumor: Three 3.5GHz PowerPC CPUs

**XBN Says:** Very hard to swallow. Today's top-of-the-line dual 2.0GHz CPU Macs require nine cooling fans, and PPC clock speeds of 3.5GHz might not be reached until 2006. A three-CPU design would be unprecedented and expensive, plus less likely than Sony's proprietary Cell to be cheap enough to sell until it's too late.



#### The Rumor: ATI R600 Video Chip

**XBN Says:** Highly likely. The original Xbox went a generation beyond current technology with a customized Nvidia GeForce 3, and ATI's R600 would fit the pattern. Assumed to be a DirectX 10 compatible chip, the R600 will be two generations beyond today's stunning RA20 and 2005's R500, which will feature better shaders.



#### The Rumor: 256MB Main RAM, 10MB Video RAM

**XBN Says:** Pretty likely. Ten megs of dedicated video RAM virtually guarantees consistent HDTV-quality visuals, while the 256MB main RAM represents a decent four times increase over current Xbox specs. That's not enough for developers, but it'll surely be faster RAM than before. Better that Microsoft just forget the third CPU entirely and double the RAM.



#### The Rumor: New Hard Disk Concept

**XBN Says:** Most likely true—for now. M-Systems execs are developing new flash storage technology for the new Xbox and have suggested that no hard drive will be included this time. But Microsoft often shifts specs at the last minute, even leaving big partners standing at the altar Expect different storage options.



#### The Rumor: "Pod Killer" Detachable Hard Disk

**XBN Says:** A one-in-a-chance Engadget posted claims that J Allard casually leaked plans to make an MP3/WMA-playing detachable Xbox hard drive and sell them at a loss (\$100 MSRP) to compete with the Pod. Great idea, but don't hold your breath. It would make more sense than a pack in.



#### The Rumor: AAA Rare and Bungie Titles Held Back From Xbox

**Our Take:** A near certainty. Following Ed Fries' departure from Microsoft, numerous Xbox games were canceled or transitioned to Xbox Next. Rare's upcoming slate, rumored to include Perfect Dark Zero and Killer Instinct 3, will supposedly accompany Halo 3 as early-ish Xbox titles. The truth should be out by the time you read this.



#### The Rumor: 2004 Release Date

**Our Take:** Damn-near impossible. First-tier companies received early development kits only months ago, and even assuming the technology was ready for manufacturing—which it's not—it's likely that Microsoft has heard the Sega Saturn launch stories already. If half the specs we've heard are true, Xbox Next could slip past late 2005 for production reasons alone.



#### The Rumor: No Backward Compatibility

**Our Take:** 50/50 odds. Takahashi quotes Nvidia's CEO to suggest that unless Nvidia chips are in the next machine, emulation is Microsoft's only option to run original Xbox games without getting sued. The new machine will be fast enough to emulate, but it'll come down to hard drives, good lawyers, and Microsoft's checkbook.



# 板垣 大解剖 ASK ITAGAKI!

Tecmo's head ninja answers your questions!

Q: Like you, I'm fortunate enough to make videogames for a living. Unfortunately, my wife pays the price if I never home to cook, clean up, or just "be around." How can I better manage my time and balance my work and life?

A: You need to have an unbalanced mind in order to be creative. If your woman doesn't understand this creativity, you have to break up with her or give up making videogames. To solve this problem, there is only one thing you can do—that is to win with your belief.

Q: I'm really good at guitar, but recent events won't let me play it seriously. What should I do?

A: When you create something, you have to be able to make it so attractive that even your worst enemies will have to recognize and compliment your great work. Don't worry about your age.

Q: Just who the hell is Pope Bright, anyway?

A: A guy who has six women. Father of Helena.

Q: Which media art world rockes me the strongest? Oh, wait...?

A: How should I know? I'll teach you how to gamble.

Q: Where can you find the exact gift of Tokyo?

A: There is no correlation between a location and a girl.

Q: What do you think are the causes that the Microsoft Xbox has been so well received by the Japanese market?

A: Thirty percent conservative Japanese characteristic, 30 percent Japanese nationalism, 40 percent lack of understanding on the above-mentioned issues. It's not an issue of quality or quantity.

Q: Why do you always wear sunglasses?

A: I don't want people to read my mind when I gamble.

Q: Describe your perfect day.

A: When I make a new discovery in my own game. More surprises like these means a better game.

Q: If Helina sleeping with Lee Fang, or are they just good friends?

A: Can't you tell by looking at them?

Q: I missed us—big time—and now I'm off to jail for six months. Any advice on how to pass while I'm in the shack? Thank you bunch, my jail.

A: Why not write a novel? If it's good, I'll read it.

Because I'm terminally things to do in a mental therapist, no does he have a degree in psychiatry. Have a question for Mr. Itagaki? Just e-mail us at [AskItagaki@avex.com](mailto:AskItagaki@avex.com)





# MUSIC GENERATOR™ 3

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# LIVE

WHERE XBOX LIVE CALLS HOME JULY 2004



# HALO 2 WE'VE PLAYED IT

Forget whiskers on kittens, we're dreaming of dual-wielding SMGs

 With expectations having soared far past the point of mortal comprehension, E3 provided the gaming press with its first viewing of *Halo 2* behind closed doors. While no single-player campaign was anywhere in sight, (Bungie is still keeping this under tight wraps), our initial skepticism quickly dissipated in the flood of assault rifles and Warthogs present in our hands-on multiplayer demo. November 9, 2004 is the official release date, and make no mistake about it: *Halo 2* will be worth the wait.

The level of detail apparent in every facet of

the one-level demo was staggering. From the texture quality to the game's magnificently intuitive feel, *Halo 2* was by far (here it comes) the best game we played at E3. Where the first title transcended its genre to provide a single-player FPS that won over those who couldn't have cared less about the genre, it's readily apparent that the sequel will effectively accomplish the same thing for the online FPS.

Available for play in our demo were both Master Chief and Elite characters; the former play much like they did in the original game, while the latter

sport energy swords and have better hand-to-hand combat skills (though it should be noted that all weapons can be used by all characters). One of the more talked-about features is, of course, the ability to use two weapons simultaneously, and the idea is to do so well...

The Zanzibar map showed superb level design, with multiple paths available for storming the base on offense and room for multiple strategies on defense—not the least of which were smartly placed outposts fully equipped with mounted gun turrets and rocket launchers.



**WHAT WE SAID:**

Halo // XBN #1

"Halo is, quite simply, the closest thing we have experienced to a living, breathing alternate universe. It is, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the Xbox's much-anticipated killer app."

XBN RATING: 10.0



Ghosts will now employ a special boost function, racing along at twice the normal speed (with a lovely glowing contrail).

Physics have been impressively improved upon, most apparent in the destructive environments and objects. Pop a few caps in the wing of the Ghost or shoot out a Warthog tire, and the damage will affect both the physical model and the vehicle's handling. Rockets can be used to take out walls and fixtures, and explosions do collateral damage to their surroundings.

Ultimately, it's hard to pick out any single groundbreaking element in Halo 2, or even anything supremely different from the original game. Instead, there is simply something fundamentally solid about the entire experience, something that builds impressively upon the first game in just the right ways. Put simply, now that we've played it, we're more excited for Halo 2 than we were before...and that speaks volumes. //

100%

DEV: Bungie PUB: Microsoft REL: November 8

**JACK MOVES**

One of the slicker features in Halo 2 is the ability to jack a vehicle while it's stopped or moving at a slow clip. Entry will be possible from the back or the front with either a deftly executed boot to the face or a fist to the back of the head as you climb up onto the vehicle. While the chaos that will surely ensue in multiplayer mode certainly has us excited, what does this mean for the single-player campaign? Cities with pedestrian-driven Ghosts swarming around, just waiting to be commanded? Hmm...



LIVE

MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

# MORTAL KOMBAT: DECEPTION

Expect lots of kicking, punching

**For a genre that thrives on real-life competition, 3D fighters have been curiously left off the Xbox Live roster.** 2004 will see an end to this drought with Mortal Kombat: Deception, Dead or Alive Ultimate, and Guilty Gear X, just to name a few.

The follow-up to the successful MK: Deadly

Alliance, Deception will offer players in-level weapons, multilevel stages, and a revamped Konquest mode that's equal parts adventure game and training mode. MK standards such as fatalities, 3D movement, and multiple fighting styles will also once again see the light of day.

Heavy tweaks and diverse modes (see below)

are requisite for a sequel, but Deception's Xbox Live support—in all modes, mind you—may be what helps it rise above and beyond the upper echelon of Xbox fighters.

**© 2004 Midway. © & ™ Midway. REL Fall 2004.**



## Puzzle Kombat

The Street Fighter/Mortal Kombat rivalry rages on as Puzzle Kombat, a Super Puzzle fighter clone, makes its way into Deception. The rules of engagement are still a mystery, but with only Tetris Worlds standing in its way for online puzzle jurisdiction, there isn't a whole lot of competition...



## Chess

Annie Archon and Michael Kombat have eloped, and the result is an online/offline strategic board game with the Kombat crew serving as the pieces. When the two sides collide, a real-time match (using normal versus mode rules) ensues. The winner keeps his square; the loser washes the dishes.



## Versus

The online star of the show, versus mode throws players across the continent together in an online arena to battle to the death. Outside of the handsome stock cast, players will also be able to use their custom Konquest fighter to achieve mortal domination. Please, folks, no quarters on the screen.

LIVE

YOU ARE NOT ALONE | THE DANGERS OF MODDING | HEADSET REVIEW

# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Fighting privacy, one Xbox at a time

 As Xbox Live chalks up more subscribers (how close to a million) and continues to diversify its lineup with titles such as *True Fantasy Live Online* and *Dead or Alive Ultimatch*, Life is getting harder to ignore.

Even the Federal Bureau of Investigation is paying attention, we now know. They hope to gain access to Xbox Live servers in order to monitor user activity and create backlogs of conversations. To make more sense of why Uncle Sam would want to listen to your game of *Rainbow Six 3*, XBN turned to the experts at Terra Nova, a website run by university professors and industry veterans who put an academic spin on the latest happenings of online worlds.

For hot legal issues, Terra Nova's Dan Hunter has answers. For this University of Pennsylvania legal studies professor,泡妞术 over virtual real estate in *Ultima Online* and underage prostitution in *The Sims Online* are everyday news. So what does Hunter think about the FBI on Xbox Live?

"I'm not sure...but they're a suspicious bunch,"

Hunter says. "Maybe they want to make sure that it's not used for the propagation of bomb-making information or as a breeding ground for terrorists."

In a twist of irony, could Microsoft and other megacorporations end up protecting users in privacy issues, as Verizon has done recently by withholding names of rebellious file sharers?

"This [would] happen only when the company sees a commercial advantage in doing so," Hunter says. "[Microsoft] won't fight the government because they just can't win. The only thing they can do is seek to have the laws changed, and in the current terrorist-inspired paranoid political environment, this is not likely."

Hunter suggests users read the End User License Agreement before signing up and vote with their feet. But he admits that very few people ever read the EULA, and even fewer protest by taking their business elsewhere. In his experience with subscription-based online worlds, Hunter has yet to see someone flee because a company sold off private data to

marketers or other private actors.

"They don't organize to protest this sort of behavior. In fact, they don't protest at all. They will still play the game even when they know that their data is being collected and sold," says Hunter.

So what if the FBI hears me



trash-talking in *Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow*?

"I don't think you need to worry," Hunter says. "The Feds trash-talk a lot as well. They're used to it."



## GAMETALK

DATE: \$24.99

**The Good:** Pretty sturdy  
**The Bad:** Hurts your head

→ Game Talk is a straightforward communication and controller unit—you know, just in case you step on them or something. (The unit has two headphones jacks, meaning two people can talk online at once.) The headset is built

sturdily, but its poor design will give you headaches after just a few minutes, and the "BONUS Second Headset" appears to be designed for ferrets or Chihuahuas.

## THE MYTHS OF MODDING

Exploring the dangers of playing online

 While doing surgery on your Xbox isn't "officially" suggested by the legal team at Microsoft, it's becoming quite the craze these days. But with more and more souped-up systems hitting the market, rumors abound about doing criminal time—or other felonious implications—for installing a mod chip. In timelier fashion, we're here to debunk the rumors.

**MYTH:** If you play Xbox Live with a modded Xbox, the FBI will bust down your door and arrest you with a warm controller still in your hand.

**TRUTH:** "I've never heard of Microsoft crashing in anyone's game room to cuff them," an anonymous expert Xbox modder, who has tinkered with more than 2,000 consoles, says. "Still, it is possible Microsoft could trace your use

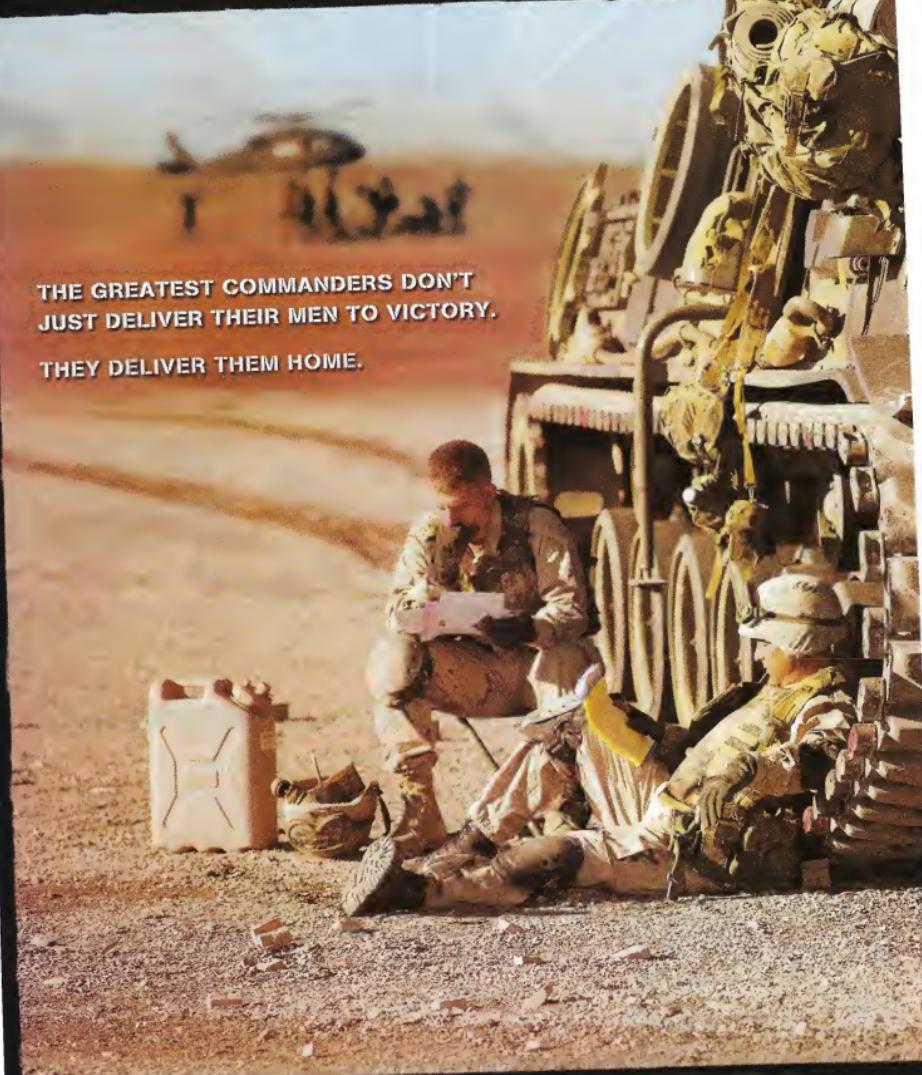
of the mod chip, since each Xbox is uniquely encoded with its own serial ID. If, by chance, some bored Live technician ran a diagnostics check, a foreign object—like a mod chip—would pop up, along with any bootlegged software you might have. Your best bet is to just buy another Xbox to play Live games and reserve your modded system for the really important stuff—like 8-bit emulation, region-free DVDs, and porn."

**MYTH:** If your mod chip has an on/off switch, you're 100 percent safe from detection.

**TRUTH:** "Not true at all," our expert says. "While a switch cloaks the existence of a mod chip, detection is still possible. The chances of anyone finding out are slim to nil...still, even if the risk is that small, it's still a risk—and it's punishable."

## PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2 TIP:

If you've been playing the single-player campaign in PGR2 while connected to Live, you might have noticed that you're placed in the top 10 for first place. So, how do the pros get such a high Kudos score? Download any player's car that's placed in the top 10 during the playback. What you'll find is that immediately following the start of the race, they begin to do donuts, letting all the other racers continue on the course. This builds up their Kudos multiplier, steadily increasing their score beyond what you'd be able to do had you just raced around the track. The next part of the trick is driving your donuts so that you have enough left on the clock to actually catch up to the racers who have gone around the track. Your goal is to get up to at least third place. The best racers are able to do donuts until the last second, leaving only enough time to catch up to the third-place person and immediately finish the race. Good luck!



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- IGN.COM

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LIVE

XBOX MEDIA CENTER // LIVE 3.0

# LIVE ON THE EDGE

Get more from your Xbox with Xbox Media Center

Right now, you're probably asking yourself, "What am I going to do with all these CD-ROMs of lame video clips sitting on my desk? Watching them on a PC is just weird." Here's the answer: Xbox Media Center. XBMC ([www.xbmcmediacenter.com](http://www.xbmcmediacenter.com)) is a homebrew application that, among other things, allows you to play various kinds of movie, audio, and picture files. Yes, it's totally free, and theoretically, all you need in order to run the recently released beta version is a modded Xbox.

Actually using this handy piece of software, however, is a bit

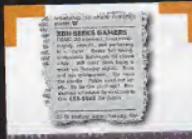


complicated. First of all, developers don't distribute the source code on their own sites, so you're on your own when it comes to acquiring it (try sites like [www.xbox-scene.com](http://www.xbox-scene.com)). Secondly, in order to actually turn the source code into something your Xbox can read, you'll have to "compile" it—basically, to run it through a specialized program that translates it from programming code to robot/machine language. That is easier said than done, though; the compilers you'll need are proprietary Microsoft programs (specifically, Microsoft Visual Studio .NET version 7.0 and higher, as well as Microsoft Xbox SDK). Unless you're good friends with a software developer, you'll likely have a hard time getting access to these, much less knowing what to do with them. But where there's a will there's a way, so if you're thus committed, the software is out there.

A ray of light comes in the form of OpenDK ([opendk.sourceforge.net](http://opendk.sourceforge.net)), a tool currently being developed by

a group of progressive developers to facilitate the dissemination of programs like XBMC. In a nutshell, it'll allow users without access to legit Microsoft tools and licenses the ability to compile homebrew

Xbox programs. It's still too primitive to be of any use to would-be XBMC users, but once it's out of beta, more will experience the dizzying highs native to this small manifestation of freedom of information. //



## SING GREEN MAGAZINE SEEKS TALENTED ONLINE GAMERS

Xbox Nation is seeking pro gamers, specifically of the online variety. Each and every month, we will publish tips and strategies from the best online gamers in the business; if you're good, tell us what makes you tick and help others tick in a similar fashion. Send e-mails to [XEN@ZiffDavis.com](mailto:XEN@ZiffDavis.com) and mark the subject line "Live All-Stars." The best responders will find their tips (and their names) in these hero pages.

# FIX UP, LOOK SHARP

Xbox Live changes clothes for its newest iteration, 3.0

If you were wondering what that last Live update download was, wonder no longer; Microsoft has quietly snuck its latest Live technologies onto your Xbox. As of this upgrade, when you send a game invite or voice-chat request, you'll be asked if you'd like to attach a voice message up to 15 seconds long. Finally, you'll know why "InSiNeKILLA" wants to add you to his friend list, and you can finally give the jerk who ran you off the road in Project Gotham Racing 2 a piece of your mind. But that's just the warm-up, because a majority of the technical upgrades this download includes won't be appreciated until new games are written to support them.

Soon enough, we'll be seeing team and competition support, online content storage for things like insignias and rosters, and new anti-cheat modifications to keep the hackers at bay. We've been asking

for team support since day one; it's a hundred times easier to invite the "XBN Azzazin" and have everyone in that group receive the message at once, rather than having to invite each member individually. The online content storage will allow upcoming games to let players make their own logos (for their teams), custom rosters, and maybe even player-designed maps—which can then be saved online for other people (like teammates) to use. It's not going to be a ton of storage space, but the last time MS gave us space to play with, we got the massive Xbox HD that after years of use still has 50,000-plus blocks available...so chances are, there will be plenty of legroom.

Meanwhile, those Xbox users who aren't Live-enabled get some sweet new incentives to join the 21st century in the form of two brand-new starter kits. The bargain version offers three months of online play,

the all-important communicator, and demo versions of MechAssault and MotoGP for \$39.99 (about \$10 cheaper than buying the items piecemeal, plus you get a grip of free demos). For \$69.99, the high-roller edition lays a full year's subscription on top of a copy of Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge—and considering the fact that Crimson Skies is high on our Top 10 Live Games list, this one's a no-brainer. //



A thrilling Live 3.0 clan formation screen

# BACK ISSUES

**Here's how to order:** Simply check off which magazines you want and send in the order form (photocopies accepted) along with a check made payable to Ziff Davis Media, for the amount indicated for each magazine plus shipping and handling—add \$3 for U.S., \$3 for Canada and \$5 for foreign orders—in U.S. funds only for each magazine! Orders should be mailed to: Back Issues, 1411 Opus Place, Ste. 340, Downers Grove, IL 60515. Price and availability subject to change without notice.

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## 15 JADE EMPIRE



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**LIVE**

ON THE DL // CANTONESE ON XBOX LIVE



# ON THE DL

The newest Xbox Live downloadable content, served fresh

## USEFUL CANTONESE PHRASES FOR XBOX LIVE

Beijing might not let them elect their own politicians, but at least Hong Kong gamers can finally connect to Xbox Live. Since its official launch on April 29, they have been tearing up Xbox Live servers in online-enabled titles such as Crimson Skies, Project Gotham Racing 2, and Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow. Here are some Cantonese phrases to bust out when playing folks from the former British colony, without offending them too heinously.

**How are you?**

Nai bo ma?

**Good morning.**

Lo sun.

**My name is...**

Ngau giu meng hi mu!

**What's your name?**

Ngau giu meng hi mu?

**Wow, you're really good!**

Ho le ah nei!

**Dammit!**

Sei loi!

**Can you speak English?**

Nei sik gung ying han?

**Ha, you suck.**

Nei gam ja gal!

**Who's your daddy?**

Nei go ba-ba hi bean go?

**Thanks for playing.**

Do leh nei tung ngo wan.

**I'm going to log off now.**

Ngo ying ga log off la.

**Let's play again sometime!**

Ngo dei dai yi chee lso wao go la!



## TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3

**DOWNLOAD:** Two new multiplayer maps: Parkade and Train Yard.

**WHY IT'S COOL:** Give the Rainbow Six 3 teams its due props: These guys have been incredibly consistent in bringing new downloadable content to their game, perhaps helping explain why it remains the most-played title on Xbox Live. Parkade brings even more loud combat mayhem to a multi-tiered parking garage, where players can use the winding ramps, concrete pillars, and parked vehicles as cover. Essentially, this arena is a sniper's paradise! Be sure not to shoot Jerry for relieving himself in a corner after Kramer can't find their car. Train Yard (which takes place in Germany) has wide-open areas that funnel down into choke points between huge railroad cars. Tension mounts quickly and easily on maps like these.



## SEGA GT ONLINE

Monthly key competitions; subscribers download "keys" to compete in races for game-related prizes. May's download key is the Hot Hatch Special on the Falcon Wing circuit. Participation prize: electronic-powered kick board.



## XBOX LIVE UPDATES

**DOWNLOAD:** Microsoft Xbox "Tsunami" Live update, April 2004.

**WHY IT'S COOL:** Microsoft's latest update took the service down for a painfully long Wednesday in April, during which the company added a multitude of new features. Since the following Thursday, Xbox Live subscribers who logged in were told that the service would update their machine (and the version number of the console's internal software, for those interested in such things) with a multitude of new and exciting features, some of which will remain dormant until game developers tap into them. The list of features includes 15-second voice messages (available now), MSN Messenger integration (available now), teams, in-game voice messaging, competitions, and online storage (available as soon as developers implement them into titles).



## ESPN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL 2K4

The delayed roster update will be ready by mid-May. OK, it's lame that it's been delayed, but at least it will be as up-to-date as humanly possible. (Sadly, however, still no Barry Bonds in this or any other MLB game.)

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# GOING LIVE LIST

Everything you wanted to know about Xbox Live (but were afraid to ask)

## TITLES WITH DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT

<b>All-Star Baseball 2004</b> Roster updates as of June 2003.	Acclaim/Acclaim	NHL Rivals 2004 Roster updates as of March 2004.	Microsoft/Microsoft
<b>All-Star Baseball 2005</b> Future roster updates and stadiums planned.	Acclaim/Acclaim	<b>Ninja Gaiden</b> Content download to be announced.	Team Ninja/Tecmo
<b>Amped 2</b> Three new courses: Sky, Pioneer, and Stapeshift 2003.	Microsoft/Microsoft	<b>Outlaw Volleyball</b> Downloads to be announced.	Hypnotic/Simon & Schuster
<b>Armada 2: Star Command</b> Future downloads to be announced.	Metro 3D/Metro 3D	<b>Phantasy Star Online Episode I &amp; II</b> Various quests available, some are time specific (Valentine's Day) and no longer downloadable.	Sonic Team/Sega
<b>Armed &amp; Dangerous</b> Summer Home mission download.	LucasArts/LucasArts	<b>Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time</b> Content to be announced.	Ubisoft/Ubisoft
<b>Brute Force</b> Two deathmatch maps and one campaign.	Digital Anvil/Microsoft	<b>Project Gotham Racing 2</b> Downloadable content to be announced.	Bizarre/Microsoft
<b>Conflict: Desert Storm II—Back to Baghdad</b> Four new soldier outfits.	Pivotal/Gotham	<b>RallySport Challenge 2</b> Downloadable content to be announced.	Digital Illusions/Microsoft
<b>Counter-Strike</b> Office and Inferno maps available for download.	Valve/Microsoft	<b>Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War</b> Barn and Safe missions are available for download.	Nerve/Activision
<b>Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge</b> The Fury plane plus the new Caverns map.	Microsoft/Microsoft	<b>Run Like Hell</b> Downloadable content to be announced.	Interplay/Interplay
<b>Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix</b> Five single songs plus two song packs available for purchase and download.	Konami/Konami	<b>Secret Weapons Over Normandy</b> Three new planes and two new missions available.	Totally/LucasArts
<b>ESPN College Hoops</b> Roster updates available soon.	Sega/ESPN	<b>Sega GT Online</b> Monthly "key" competitions available.	WOW/Sega
<b>ESPN Major League Baseball</b> Roster updates available soon.	Sega/ESPN	<b>Soldier of Fortune 2: Double Helix</b> Five new deathmatch maps available.	Gratuitous/Activision
<b>ESPN NBA Basketball</b> Roster updates available soon.	Sega/ESPN	<b>Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic</b> Yavin Station location available for download.	Bioware/LucasArts
<b>ESPN NFL Football</b> Updates available.	Sega/ESPN	<b>Star Wars: The Clone Wars</b> Two maps available, Rhen Var and Kashyyyk.	Pandemic/LucasArts
<b>Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee</b> Downloads coming soon.	Pipeworks/Atari	<b>SWAT: Global Strike Team</b> Content to be announced.	Argonaut/Vivendi
<b>High Heat Major League Baseball 2004</b> Roster updates as of May 2003.	3DO/3DO	<b>Tenchu: Return From Darkness</b> New content coming soon.	K2/Activision
<b>Hunter: The Reckoning—Redeemer</b> Skills, weapons, cheats, and new characters will be available.	High Voltage/Vivendi	<b>Toejam &amp; Earl 3: Mission to Earth</b> Three new characters and two new environments available.	T3land/Sega
<b>Links 2004</b> Plantation and Ocean Mill director's cut courses now available.	Microsoft/Microsoft	<b>Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon</b> Content to be announced.	Red Storm/Ubisoft
<b>MLB Inside Pitch 2003</b> Roster updates planned for release.	Microsoft/Microsoft	<b>Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Island Thunder</b> Refinery, Beach, Ghost Town, and Train Depot maps available.	Red Storm/Ubisoft
<b>Magic: The Gathering—Battlegrounds</b> Downloads to be announced.	Secret Level/Atari	<b>Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3</b> Five new deathmatch maps available.	Ubisoft Montreal/Ubisoft
<b>MechAssault</b> Four downloadable update packs available, some at a small cost.	Day1/Microsoft	<b>Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell</b> Kola Cell, Veslka Infiltration, and Veslka missions available.	Ubisoft Montreal/Ubisoft
<b>Midtown Madness 3</b> Four new cars available, with more coming soon.	Digital Illusions/Microsoft	<b>Top Spin</b> Downloadable content on the way.	PAM/Microsoft
<b>MTRX: Mototrax</b> New tracks and other downloadable content coming soon.	Left Field/Activision	<b>Unreal Championship</b> Four new deathmatch levels available.	Digital Extremes/Atari
<b>NX Superfly</b> Two new tracks and nine new riders available.	Pacific Coast Power & Light/THQ	<b>Whacked!</b> Content to be announced.	Presto/Microsoft
<b>NBA Inside Drive 2004</b> Roster updates coming soon.	High Voltage/Microsoft	<b>Worms 3D</b> Content coming soon.	Team17/Acclaim
<b>NFL Fever 2003</b> Roster updates as of fall 2002.	Microsoft/Microsoft	<b>XIII</b> Content coming soon.	Ubisoft France/Ubisoft
<b>NFL Fever 2004</b> Roster updates to be announced.	Microsoft/Microsoft	<b>Xbox Music Mixer</b> Four karaoke bundles available for download as premium content.	Wild Tangent/Microsoft

So you've got a shiny new Xbox Live account and a fat stack of games gathered into small (but organized) piles on your floor, but you don't know where to start. Well, here's

our guide to everything Xbox Live: the games you can play online now, the games that have downloadable content, and the games with online capabilities that you should be

looking out for in the near future. We've also got a list of the most popular games out there as of right now, so you know where to go for the stiffest competition around.

## TITLES WITH ONLINE PLAY CAPABILITY

All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim/Acclaim	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft/Montreal/Ubisoft
Amped 2	Microsoft/Microsoft	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	Ubisoft/Montreal/Ubisoft
Burnout 2: Point of Impact—Developer's Cut	Criterion/Acclaim	Top Spin	Parm/Microsoft
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts (Live scoreboard only)	Fun Labs/Activation	Unreal Championship	Digital Extremes/Atari
Capcom vs. SNK 2: E.O.	Capcom/Capcom	Unreal II—The Awakening	Legend Entertainment and Tantalus/Atari
Counter-Strike	Valve/Microsoft	World Championship Pool 2004	Blade Interactive/Jaleco
Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge	Microsoft/Microsoft	Worms 3D	Team17/Acclaim
Dead Man's Hand	Human Head/Atari	XIII	Ubisoft France/Ubisoft
ESPN College Hoops	Sega/ESPN		
ESPN Major League Baseball	Sega/ESPN		
ESPN NBA Basketball	Sega/ESPN		
ESPN NFL Football	Sega/ESPN		
ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega/ESPN		
MLB Inside Pitch 2003	Microsoft/Microsoft		
Links 2004	Microsoft/Microsoft		
Magic: The Gathering—Battlegrounds	Secret Level/Atari		
MechAssault	Day1/Microsoft		
Midnight Club II	Rockstar San Diego/Rockstar		
Midtown Madness 3	Digital Illusions/Microsoft		
Midway Arcade Treasures (Live scoreboard only)	Digital Eclipse/Midway		
MotoGP 2	Climax/THQ		
MTX: Mototrax	Left Field/Activision		
NBA Inside Drive 2004	High Voltage Software/Microsoft		
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Visual Concepts/Sega		
NFL Fever 2003	Microsoft/Microsoft		
NFL Fever 2004	Microsoft/Microsoft		
NHL Rivals 2004	Microsoft/Microsoft		
Ninja Gaiden	Team Ninja/Tecmo		
Outlaw Volleyball	Hypnotix/Simon & Schuster		
Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II	Sonic Team/Sega		
Project Gotham Racing 2	Bizarre/Microsoft		
RallySport Challenge 2	Digital Illusions/Microsoft		
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War	Nerve/Activision		
Sega GT Online	WOW/Sega		
Sega Sports NBA 2K3	Sega/Sega		
Sega Sports NFL 2K3	Visual Concepts/Sega		
Sega Sports NHL 2K3	Visual Concepts/Sega		
Soldier of Fortune 2: Double Helix	Gratuitous/Activision		
Star Wars Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy	Vivarious Visions/LucasArts		
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	Pandemic/LucasArts		
Steel Battalion: Line of Contact	Capcom/Capcom		
Tenchu: Return From Darkness	K2/Activision		
Tetris Worlds Online Edition	THQ/THQ		
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Red Storm/Ubisoft		
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Island Thunder	Red Storm/Ubisoft		

## TITLES COMING SOON WITH ONLINE CAPABILITIES

Battlefield: Modern Combat (available fall 2004)	EA/EA
Black9 (available fall 2004)	Taldren/Majesco
Burnout 3 (available September 2004)	Criterion/EA
Conker: Live and Reloaded	Rare/Microsoft
Dead or Alive: Ultimate	Team Ninja/Tecmo
Fable (Live Aware only)	Big Blue Box/Lionhead
Forza Motorsport	Microsoft/Microsoft
Full Spectrum Warrior	Pandemic/THQ
Halo 2	Bungie/Microsoft
Jade Empire (Live Aware only)	BioWare/Microsoft
Madden NFL 2005	EA/EA
MechAssault 2: Lone Wolf	Day1/Microsoft
Metal Slug 3 (Live scoreboard only)	SNK Playmore/SNK NEO GED USA
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	EA/EA
True Fantasy Live Online	Level-5/Microsoft
Unreal Championship 2: The Liandri Conflict	Epic/Microsoft

## TOP 5 XBOX LIVE GAMES

The most popular games on Xbox Live

- 1 Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3  
Ubisoft Montreal/Ubisoft
- 2 Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow  
Ubisoft Montreal/Ubisoft
- 3 Counter-Strike  
Microsoft/Microsoft
- 4 Project Gotham Racing 2  
Bizarre Creations/Microsoft
- 5 TOCA Race Driver  
Codemasters/Codemasters

DOA

DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE



# LIVE AND KICKING

**DEAD OR ALIVE: ULTIMATE PACKAGES TWO GREAT FIGHTING GAMES FOR ONE GREAT ONLINE SERVICE, AND TRULY IT IS NOW THE BREAST OF TIMES FOR XBOX OWNERS. TAKE A GANDER AT THE WORLD'S FIRST ONLINE 3D BRAWLER.**

WORDS: GREG ORLANDO

**TOKYO, JAPAN—The captain has turned on the seat belt sign. For the short duration of this flight, the belt should be fastened and drawn low across the lap.**

Dead or Alive fighter Kasumi flies into the air with the greatest of unease, and the young redhead's beating in three dimensions appears exquisite but painful, sort of a masochist's Sunday morning root canal. She's been knocked off a ledge and plummets toward the base of a waterfall. Her enemy follows her, jumping down, ready to administer what for if what becomes necessary.

Cheers erupt from somewhere in Tecmo's headquarters. The sound pipes through an Xbox Live Communicator. A few minutes ago, Tomonobu Itagaki laughed when asked if his game *Dead or Alive: Ultimate* was being played online via Xbox Live or merely over a network. "No fake," he said, and smiled. Normally, the primarily Japanese-speaking Itagaki waits for the translator to speak, but this question seems too important to leave to someone else.

Eight years ago, Itagaki and Tecmo's

Team Ninja made history of sorts with the 3D fighter *Dead or Alive*. The game, for both Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn, simultaneously pushed the dual boundaries of polygonal beauty and good taste; its female fighters possessed jiggling, undulating bosoms that rolled and shook like ships on stormy seas. Oh, and the fighting was darn good, too. Now, with three *Dead or Alive* games and various versions thereof, as well as an odd bikini-collecting spin-off in *Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* having seen release, Itagaki and Team Ninja stand ready to take the fighting-game franchise into uncharted waters yet again. *Ultimate* will be released exclusively on Xbox as the world's first online 3D fighter.

#### ALIVE ON LIVE

*Ultimate* completes the original Saturn version of *Dead or Alive* and the PlayStation 2's *Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore*. The rhyme and reason behind the versions come from Itagaki himself; the Saturn iteration is a personal favorite of its creator and has the added bonus of having never been released in the United States. The PlayStation 2's *Hardcore* merits inclusion because,

simply, it's the most advanced version of the game in terms of fighting arenas, character costumes, and graphic effects.

"This version is more hardcore," Itagaki says about *Ultimate's* *Hardcore*. It's here Itagaki and his team are putting most of their time and energy. The game is being redone with the *Volleyball* engine, making it look even better than the Xbox-exclusive *Dead or Alive 3*. In addition, the Xbox version of *Hardcore* features a series of new multibit fighting stages, extra costumes for the fighters, lots of superfluous baubles to collect, and new moves for its colorful combatants. In contrast, the original *Alive* appears unchanged, warts and all, a delightfully throwback to the series' beginnings.

Both games will be playable online through Xbox Live. Certain modes support up to eight players at once, although all fights, including those of the tag-team variety, will be strictly one-on-one. Players not directly participating in the fistfights become voyeurs, watching the proceedings and commenting on the action via the Xbox Live Communicator headset. The ability to alter the camera's view for spectators might be forthcoming, Itagaki says, although it wasn't evident in the game's first



After the Brady girls killed and ate Cindy, they turned on one another.



**GO ONLINE, YOUNG MAN**

Dead or Alive Ultimate offers lots of options for online brawling. Xbox Live modes include arcade, team battle, tournament, one-on-one, Kumite, "loser stays" training, and survival. All, save for one-on-one, are playable by eight people. Further, certain modes allow players to choose a duo whose members can fight in tandem with one another for brief periods, performing powerful tag-team throws, slams, and attacks.

playable version.

A grade system allows potential combatants to select their skill level. In this way, players need not fear fighting out of their weight class. Additional options allow the playing field to be further leveled and also customized; games can be created exclusively for a player and his friends, and particulars such as life gauges, match points, round times, and battle types can be chosen.

Standard Xbox Live trappings are on their way, too. Voice-masking effects allow players to alter their speech so as to appear to be a cartoon character, a big guy, a child, a female or male robot, an enigmatic "Dark Master," or a whisperer. A custom feature, possibly the first of its kind, holds a series of sliders that, when properly manipulated, can create a unique signature speech masking.

International fights may not be possible, Itagaki suggests there might be a noticeable delay if online play occurred between folks on

different continents. For Itagaki, who emphatically states *Ultimate* will run at a smooth 60fps—in fact, he scoffs at 30fps as a silly rumor—any sort of choppiness or fly gumming the works would be an affront not likely to be tolerated.

#### MOVIN' PICTURES

Two films from *Ultimate* have surfaced so far, and it's here Itagaki and company show off the magic in the mod. The first, the game's trailer, was shown at May's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). It offered the standard *Dead or Alive* fare: loud rock music, gorgeous electronic women hammering away at one another, and beautiful sun-kissed multilevel stages from which unfortunate men and women are knocked and sent flying. Largely revelatory only for its graphical beauty and hints of new gameplay features, the trailer nonetheless served as fuel for the hype machine.

The second, less-seen film comes from the game's opening. Aerosmith's wistful "Dream On"

serves as musical accompaniment; Tecmo pressed for and gained the rights to the classic tune. Here, preteen versions of *Alive* fighters Kasumi, Ayane, and Hayate take part in a sad tale of revenge and fishing, with the game's main villain, a scarred man, emerging to the fore. It's here Tecmo offers its first and only hint as to the game's story mode—and to the origins of Ayane and Kasumi's mutual enmity. Story mode, of course, will be playable offline and holds the key to unlocking all the game's extras, such as costumes and collectible goodies.

For now, the opening movie features Japanese text and remains as enigmatic as the chain-smoking man responsible for its creation.

#### ULTIMATE ITAGAKI...

Itagaki wears his trademark sunglasses indoors. His long, black hair drapes down the sides of his face. He's wearing a leather jacket partially obscuring a très fashionable orange-and-black T-shirt. Dark bluish-black pants and sandals

DOA

DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE



DOD

DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE



CHARACTERS CAN NOW  
PERFORM "SLOPE" MOVES TO  
FURTHER INJURE AN OPPONENT  
WHILE TRAVELING DOWNHILL—  
THE DENNIS RODMAN LOOK-  
ALIKE ZACK CAN NOW LEAP ON  
TOP OF A FOE AND RIDE HIM OR  
HER DOWN A SNOWY HILL.



In the jungle (OK, savanna), the mighty jungle, the thong creeps up Tina's ass.



complete the picture. When he smiles or laughs, a touch of mischief at once childlike and endearing dances across his face. Here is a man who would look right at home holding a guitar—or, in the more earthly parlance of the people, an ax—and putting forth the question, *Cleveland, are you ready to rock?*

Yet, in a rare unguarded moment when he removes his glasses to rub at his eyes, a greater truth emerges: Itagaki looks tired. The redness in his eyes betrays not only a Visine-free existence, but also Itagaki's weariness, and in that brief instant, the man appears every second of his 37 years. And then some.

As former Beavis Ringo Starr once sang, "You know it don't come easy." Team Ninja does not exist as one man, and Itagaki quickly notes the efforts of the development staff. He speaks without reservation about his pride in the team's efforts and thanks its members for their hard work. Yet for all intents and purposes, Itagaki is *Ultimate*. He



must show the game off when it becomes necessary to do so. He must field questions, give demonstrations, and show the promotional trailers. *Ultimate* as an expression of Itagaki's desire and determination, its great beauty and technological-boundary shoving, comes at a price. There will be some suffering for this art. It's written in the man's eyes, then hidden behind dark glasses.

#### ULTIMATE BEATINGS

When it comes time to take hold of the Xbox controller and don the Communicator headset, Itagaki makes one thing perfectly clear: no quarter will be given. Team Ninja employees fight to win. One of the three Team Ninja competitors is the game's chief planner, an unseen and unnamed man for whom the can of whoop ass comes already preopened and with a bottomless supply. Later, Itagaki himself steps into the fray, casually distributing beatings in the manner of a high-



school teacher passing out tardy slips to recalcitrant students.

For the purposes of the hands-on preview, certain stages are locked. So, regrettably, it's not possible to fight on Itagaki's gorgeous African savanna with its lumbering elephants and menacing lions. This is a shame, as early gameplay videos show the wrestler Tina knocking a fellow fighter into a pool of water and then tossing him indifferently into a nearby pachyderm. It's visually arresting and a testament to Team Ninja's efforts to make the Xbox *Hardcore* more than just a rehash with online play added.

As part of the game's Xbox reworking, Itagaki promises that each character will be able to perform three new types of attacks. Characters can now perform "slope" moves to further injure an opponent while traveling downhill—the Dennis Rodman look-alike Zack can now leap on top of a fence and ride him or her down a snowy hill. There will also be special attacks in which the sky,





apparently, is not the limit and fighters can hurt one another into a room's ceiling with devastating effects. As for the third special strike, it remains a guarded secret to be unearthed only by dedicated fans.

Arcade mode is selected, mostly because it's the only mode fully playable right now. Four men enter, figuratively, of course. Two fight at a time.

Only one leaves triumphant.

### DREAM ON, YOUNG WHIPPING BOY...

At once, it's clear, *Ultimate* does not stutter. Sure, there are brief flickers, little bits of play that are perhaps a touch off. But they don't negatively impact the fighting and could conceivably be attributed to, well, many things, including sunspots and maybe bad karma.



The fighting is just fine, thank you. Winners fight until defeated and the losers get to watch the next match and stew. The smart fighters know to use the interactive environments and exploit the deadly terrain to their advantage. Walls become weapons. Cherry-blossom-shedding trees are not just wonderful tools to wash stages with falling pink petals, but also a means by which an opponent can be remade into a defeated opponent. Ledges can be used for the sole purpose of sending chumps flying over them.

In the surprise and also feel-good upset of the season, a plucky young writer from the American periodical Xbox Nation uses Tina to slip an attack by the karate-fighting Ein, then knocks the jerk right into a stone column. Finally, she counters an attack by back painfully. Score one for defensive play and the underdog. But in *Ultimate*, really, everyone's a winner. Except for the dumb sucker who has to wait his turn before getting back to kicking some gorgeously rendered face. //

**SURE, THERE ARE BRIEF FLICKERS, LITTLE BITS OF PLAY THAT ARE PERHAPS A TOUCH OFF, BUT THEY DON'T NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE FIGHTING AND COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO, WELL, MANY THINGS, INCLUDING SUNSPOTS AND MAYBE BAD KARMA.**



### DEAD OR ALIVE

Tina, Tanya, Tomo, Anna, Triggle, and Tomi Nana clearly want the emphasis put on the *Dead or Alive 2* hardcore portion of *Dead or Alive Ultimate*. After all, it showcases 2D's graphical power and holds all of the game's new costumes and stages. So it comes as no surprise that the original *Dead or Alive* is largely only briefly—then proto-bigger and more beautiful things. Blame the buxom wrestler Tina (she's with brown hair, as does the ninja Kasumi), Triggle (an amateur to make her hair color blonde and red, respectively), our mother Selina, the PlayStation could handle its shading effects... Regardless, it's easy to see the flashes of inspiration on the game's when more mature-themed fighting, the stories that can be used to a fighter's advantage, and the graphical excesses of its female characters.

DOA

DEAD OR ALIVE ULTIMATE



# FUTURE

PREVIEWS AND IMPRESSIONS JULY 2004

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## THIS MONTH

An infusion of fresh blood for Xbox at E3 2004

Even though the game industry still, as a whole, suffers from sequelitis, E3 2004 showed that there's room for originality on Xbox. Nested behind brash blockbuster sequels such as *Prince of Persia 2*, *Splinter Cell 3*, and the indomitable *Halo 2* are

new franchises with the goods to topple the status quo. Surprises this year include *Destroy All Humans*, THQ's lighthearted take on alien abduction mythos, and *Citizen Zero*, Micro Force's ambitious MMORPG-cum-first-person-shooter, in a cutthroat

two-system race between Xbox and PlayStation 2 this year, it's originality that will ultimately distinguish the winner's library. Based on its showing at E3, Xbox has the potential to make this a watershed year. Now cross your wrists and shout, "Xbox, unite!"

## IN ROTATION: WHAT WE'RE PLAYING



**1** Guilty Gear X2 #Reload  
Xbox



**2** Lineage II  
PC



**3** Full Spectrum Warrior  
Xbox



**4** Rainbow Six 3:  
Black Arrow (Xbox)

Heaven or hell? Let's rock—soak and muck and block and lock horns with #Reload, a 2D fighter that's both gorgeous to behold and intuitive to play. It's gonna get dicey.

It started mostly as curiosity about Korea's 2 million player-strong Lineage MMORPG, but it soon turned into a regrettable addiction. Now if only True Fantasy Live were finished...

Xbox Nation finally got its proverbial hands on this amazing, lifelike tactical real-time strategy title. We'll beat the game and tell you about it in our review next issue.

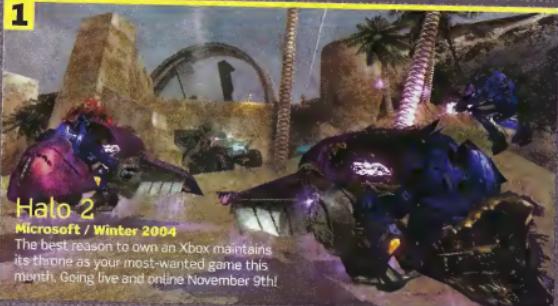
When we tire of creeping around in the shadows of *Pandora Tomorrow*, we pop this bad boy in for some run-and-gun. Black Arrow adds better AI and more multiplayer maps.

# XPECTING

## XBN Readers' Top 5 Most Wanted Games

To own an Xbox is to wait for the next big thing, and 2004 is undoubtedly the best year ever for Xbox games. Head over to our website ([www.xbnmag.com](http://www.xbnmag.com)) and rock the vote on the game you want most!

1



### Halo 2

**Microsoft / Winter 2004**

The best reason to own an Xbox maintains its throne as your most-wanted game this month. Going live and online November 9th!

2



### Fable

**Microsoft / Fall 2004**

Coming in at an overwhelming second place two issues in a row is *Fable*, Peter Molyneux's experimental social-simulation RPG. Now without Xbox Live support!

3



### Mercenaries

**LucasArts / Fall 2004**

Playing *Mercenaries* on the E3 show floor was enough reason for many to vote this surprise shooter into third place. Open-ended gameplay intriguing and addictive.

4



### DOA Ultimate

**Tecmo / Fall 2004**

Current Xbox development darlings Team Ninja remain in the spotlight with their online 3D fighter. Check out our tantalizing brief story for all the ugly details.

5



### Republic Commando

**LucasArts / Fall 2004**

Wouldn't it be nice if—in real life—all wars were fought on your Xbox? And wouldn't it be even nicer if this killing took place in a galaxy far, far away?

Tecmo's new mech shooter *Gungnir* combines fantasy-realism and arcade action for stylish warfare.

FUTURE

THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE THIRD AGE

Electronic Arts takes roleplaying down to Middle-earth



"Let's hunt some orc," royal ranger Aragorn says at the close of Director Peter Jackson's first *Lord of the Rings* flick. You won't find that finishing line in J.R.R. Tolkien's dusty novel—but the catchphrase does a dandy job summing up EA Games' two action-packed console *Lord of the Rings* games. Still, Rings fans couldn't help but wonder why EA didn't go with the more obvious role-

playing genre for the revered license. Enter *The Third Age*, a proper RPG that has players taking a party of Middle-earthlings on quests that intersect the films' events, plus unlocking missions in the service of perpetual redeye-sufferer Sauron.

**Wait, so you don't play as little Frodo or crusty old Gandalf?**

Unlike its hack-n-slash counterparts, this game is all about molding an avatar of your own. "You can play as humans, elves, and dwarves on the good side," Senior Producer Todd Arnold says, "and Uruk-hai, goblins, and a bunch of other nasties on the evil side. Certain races will be predisposed to acquire certain abilities." So is this basically *The Lord of the Rings* meets *KOTOR*?

Actually, think more along the lines of the *Final Fantasy* series on the PlayStation 2 and you're close.

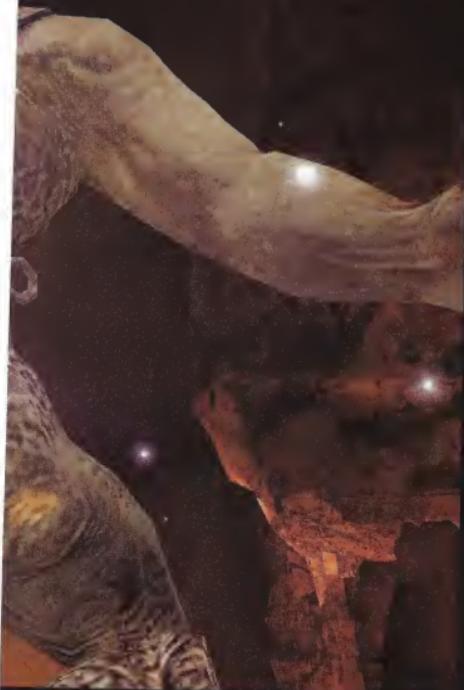


Combat takes place in turn-based battles that'll feel familiar with Square's RPG series. "Obviously we have our own game mechanics," Executive Producer Steve Gray says, "but we want fans of the genre to be able to quickly pick it up and easily start playing."

You'll even saddle up for combat on horseback or atop warg beasts, charging into battles like Helms Deep (although you never control an entire army—just a small party). Your adventure will take you to every film locale plus barely glimpsed points of interest. "Optional side quests will give the player freedom," Arnold says, "and prevent any two players' experiences from being alike." //



CRTI  
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## VOICE ACTORS

### Return of the Rings alumni

→ Although Director Peter Jackson didn't film any exclusive scenes for *The Third Age* (which still packs a load of re-edited sequences from the flicks), Electronic Arts is retelling the movies' stars to record new computer-generated sequences. "We are definitely writing lots of new

scenes for the actors," Nina Dobner, EA's director of partner relations, says. Ian "Gandalf" McKellen is confirmed to return, but EA isn't so sure about the other marquee stars, many of whom seem keen on leaving Middle-earth behind. In other words, expect some sound-alikes and appearances from

actors much farther down the cast list. "We hope to include a few more characters that you haven't seen in our games yet," Dobner says.





# FORZA MOTORSPORT

Microsoft gets serious under the hood

**↳** The only problem with realistic driving simulators on Xbox is that, well—they don't so much exist. You might argue that Project Gotham Racing 2 fills the hardcore niche nicely, but car buffs weaned on years of Gran Turismo would laugh you right off the tarmac, citing that Gotham's controls are about as realistic as Mario Kart's. In the first-party eyes of Microsoft, this lack of a serious driving-sim contender is a real gap on a system associated with high-end gadgets and whiz-bang sound systems. Enter Forza Motorsport, a game—whose recent unveiling at E3

surprised absolutely no one—that makes so much sense in Microsoft's world of khaki-clad gamers and the exotic cars they drive.

#### Is Forza more evolution than revolution?

To be honest, it's kind of hard to tell at this early stage. But judging from the build we've gotten hands-on with, Forza will, if nothing else, be as good as—if not better than—the status quo. In terms of familiar genre territory, Forza taps into Gran Turismo's "auto collector" mentality, by giving players an unspecified number of cars to accumulate in one's garage. More than 60

manufacturers (name 'em, they're here) will offer up their wheels, with plenty of options for purchasing and installing aftermarket mods. Like other racing games of late, tricking out your car will also have a visual exterior impact. Forza features an intimidatingly deep tweaking system for those who like to get their hands a little dirty. Other realism highlights include full damage modeling for cars (which affects performance), as well as sophisticated handling physics that takes into account minute details such as tire pressure and weight transfer. In other words, weaksauce drivers need not apply.

#### But is it pushing the racing genre forward any?

Yes, although we've yet to see these evolutionary features implemented in-game. Microsoft is touting that Forza will revolutionize AI in racing games with its Drivatar technology. With Drivatar, you'll be able to teach your Xbox how to drive like a pro (by example, of course). Once you've honed your AI's driving skill, you can then take it on to Xbox Live to compete and win races for you. Speaking of online, Forza will, of course, support Xbox Live 3.0's advance community features. The only thing Forza needs is support for a quality force feedback racing wheel for Xbox. Good news: Microsoft has listened to fans and an official wheel is on its way. //

## NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Shiny, happy sports cars doing laps

**↳** Last year, Need for Speed Underground put rice rockets on the minds of gamers everywhere. But behind the slick neon-lit nights was a driving game some players felt was repetitive and lacking in depth. Underground 2 hopes to remedy these shortcomings. Let me guess...more tuning and variety in the sequel?

You, sir, are correct! The ability to tweak performance upgrades is now a major focus of the game. And in terms of variety, Underground 2 has opted for a new free-roaming structure. You can drive to races and tuner shops alike by way of a unique freeway system that connects five city districts populated by rival gangs and different racing turfs.

#### We like the cars, the cars that go boom on Xbox Live.

With EA titles going Live in 2004 (see our E3 feature on page 18 of this issue), you'll be able to drift online with your fully customized wheels later this year.

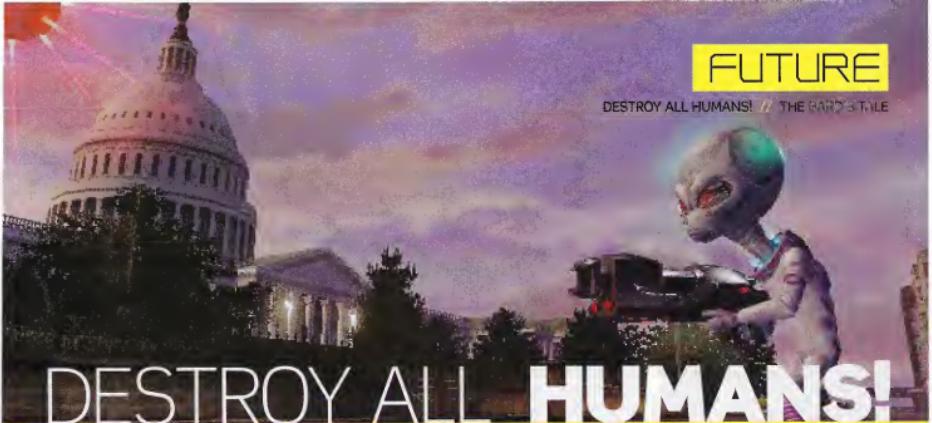


DRIVER  
DEV: EA Canada PUB: EA RE: Fall



FORZA  
DEV: Microsoft PUB: Microsoft RE: Winter





FUTURE

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! // THE BARD'S TALE

# DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

Can Pandemic pull off its "Grand Theft Auto: Roswell"?

 Pathetic humans, eating your Cheez Doodles and wallowing in your own crappulence! The hour of your destruction is at hand. From the creators of the hardcore military simulation *Full Spectrum Warrior* (reviewed next issue) comes *Destroy All Humans!*, a wacky, tongue-in-cheek love letter to sci-fi Americana and Tim Burton's cult comedy flick *Mars Attacks!* Combine the twisted prospect of playing as a space invader with the game's nonlinear, open-ended sandbox designs and you've got one of the freshest visions to emerge out of E3 2004.

**Sweet, so you're playing as UFO-lovin', big-headed, gray-skinned, three-fingered freaks?**

That's right. As a "Gray" you will take part in *Communion*-style antics such

as probings for man, woman, and child, as well as animal mutilations and vehicular abductions—all in the name of weird science, to be sure. Or, if big-budget Hollywood time-wasters like *Independence Day* are more your cup of tea, you can opt to rain death on the populace with extra-terrestrial abandon.

**Whatever happened to nice, friendly aliens like E.T.?**

E.T.'s pansy ass spawned—on the Atari 2600—one of the most horrific adventures ever in the history of videogames. The morally ambiguous aliens here speed around in cloaked UFOs capable of capturing humans with tractor beams or leveling entire

blocks with fearsome laser technology. And because the game is entirely open-ended, feel free to snatch some bodies, hypnotize the ladies, and walk among the humans, causing havoc with your frightful, oblong-shaped powers.

**Hmm, it does sound like *Grand Theft Auto: Roswell*...**

Although *Humans!* has nonlinear missions and an addictive "anything goes" sort of vibe, it's the game's sci-fi references and inside humor that will really strike a chord with conspiracy geeks everywhere. //



## THE BARD'S TALE

The Monty Python of RPGs

 *The Bard's Tale* made RPGs in the mid-'80s by introducing mind-blowing innovations like "color graphics" and "animation." Now, Brian Fargo, the man behind the original *Tale*, is reviving the series as the debut for his new development studio, InXile. Running on the same engine that

powers the *Baldur's Gate*

console games, *Fargo's* updated *Tale* hopes to revisit the genre from a completely new perspective.

**Wait, so this isn't just another top-down hack-and-slash RPG?**

*Tale* features plenty of fast-paced combat and 30-plus hours worth of quests to undertake, the game's most novel virtue is that it's actually funny.

**Funny? Like funny "ha ha?"**

Funnier than *Shrek*, *Tale* satirizes RPG genre conventions (e.g., nonsensical side quests) to good effect, with voice work by Cary Elwes (*The Princess Bride*). If the team can maintain pacing and humor throughout, *Tale* could be one of the most creative RPGs in 2004. //



OPINION  
DEV: BRIAN FARGO INXILE INC. FALL



# PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

Arabian nights with Ubisoft's prince among sequels

Last year, Ubisoft's Prince of Persia rocked us like a hurricane. The short but sweet action-adventure turned gaming narratives upside down by telling its tale of greed and

redemption in reverse flashbacks. Still, hardcore gamers, as they are wont to do, complained about Persia's fluid but flawed combat system. For the series' Xbox encore, Ubisoft has duly noted such

criticism by completely revamping how the prince gives a beatdown.

**Now hold on a minute, I thought**

**the combat was just fine!**

Although development on Persia 2 is still in its early stages, we think the overhaul in the fighting system will be a good move. Those of you familiar with the original Persia know that combat, although smooth and cinematic, was ultimately shallow and repetitive. To that end, Ubisoft has added the element of weapons for the sequel. Not only will the Prince now be able to wield dual weapons in a fight—each with its own gameplay and timing—he'll also have the ability to pry these weapons from his enemies' cold, dead fingers. More important, the Prince's ability to cancel out of predetermined combos and go into other attack strings truly makes this a deeper fighting experience.

**Sounds tight, but can Ubisoft pull off a better story line?**

Following his adventure in the first game, Fate—as an immortal incarnation—will be hunting the Prince for having cheated death. The Prince will still be able to manipulate time (think *Vewtiful Joe*-style platform puzzles) in and out of combat, thanks to a relic he kept from *The Sands of Time*. //





FUTURE

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2 DEMON STONE

# FORGOTTEN REALMS DEMON STONE

Armchair viking needs food badly



If you haven't had enough of the Dungeons & Dragons: Forgotten Realms universe with the two *Baldur's Gate*: *Dark Alliance* games, Atari is happy to serve up more in *Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone*. Developer Stormfront Studios (the folks behind those fine Electronic Arts Tolkien adaptations) promises that all of the proper third-edition rules (do people still care about all that stuff?) will underlie the fast-paced beat-em-up gameplay.

**So if it's an action game by the same developer, how is this game any different from *Return of the King*?**

Sure, it's the same engine, albeit one with some heavy tweaks, but *Demon Stone* is a pretty different beast. You can switch between your three party members (warrior, mage, and thief) at any time on the fly,

whether it's because they're the best in a given situation or because you prefer their gameplay style. To be sure, fans of *Gauntlet* retreads will undoubtedly pick up on *Demon Stone's* genre clichés, since it is, after all, an official D&D game.

**So who's the crusty dungeon master in *Demon Stone*?**

The game's story comes from noted fantasy author RA Salvatore, and to the delight of Dungeons & Dragons players everywhere, he's worked fan-favorite Drizzt Do Urdan into the plot (huh?). To lend the proceedings a further touch of Hollywood class, Patrick Stewart ("Make it so!") and Michael Clarke Duncan (the healer in *The Green Mile*) provide voiceovers for the two main nonplayer characters. //



## Persian Rough Rider

One boss we ran into in an early version of *Persia 2* was a massive troll-like monster reminiscent in size to that of the Balrog in *The Lord of the Rings*. Since whacking at his armored legs with your puny sword won't do much good, you'll need to climb atop his body to get at his head—if you aren't picked off and thrown across the room first.



FUTURE

LEADERS OF THE OLD SCHOOL

# LEADERS OF THE OLD SCHOOL

Six incoming classics prove that 2D is alive and well in the class of '04



## MAXIMUM

DEVI SNK VS. CAPCOM 2 U.S. Sept.

## SVC CHAOS

More bad blood between SNK and Capcom

↳ The only thing more old school than 2D aficionados Capcom and SNK is the competitive rivalry that exists between the two Japanese fighting game companies. Having already joined forces once in the uneven, Capcom-developed Capcom Vs. SNK series of which the Xbox version features online play on Live as well as the subtitle "EX", SNK is ready to return the favor by producing its own rendition of two pixelated worlds colliding.



### Have SNK or Capcom learned any new tricks?

Perhaps they've learned the value of keeping gameplay accessible, because SVC bears the markings of a casual fighting game. Those of you who take your fighting games more seriously should probably wait for Capcom's recently announced Street Fighter Anniversary Collection. In the meantime, better to think of SVC as the Dead or Alive of 2D fighters.

### DOA? Do the characters have

any, um, "bounce", then?

If you're looking for bounce, look no further than Mai the ninja from SNK. In fact, fans of SNK characters will get to play, for the first time ever, as characters from the Metal Slug series, as well as the incredibly sexy Mr. Karate from the original Art of Fighting series. //



## GUILTY GEAR X2 #RELOAD

The future of 2D fighting games

→ If there is a better deal on a 2D fighter in the next five years, we'd like to see it. #Reload (pronounced "Sharp Reload"), the tuned-up version of the high-res heavy-metal brawler from Arc System Works, will go on sale this summer for 20 bucks.

### Sounds cheap. So what's the catch?

No catch—the game rules. Twenty bytes buys 20-plus characters, progressive-scan video, the vastly improved X2 soundtrack, and Xbox Live support for head-to-head matches online. And if these aren't

reason enough to plop down some change, #Reload includes at least one extra character to master and a host of tweaks to the game's timing and balance based on player feedback from the original version.

### Okay—I'm sold.

So are we. Publisher Sammy's American arm originally passed on #Reload in favor of the new Guilty Gear Isuka for PlayStation 2. Props, then, to Majesco for picking up Sammy's slack—just don't tell them we probably would have paid more for such an excellent package! //



PRESS START



PRESS START

PRESS START

## METAL SLUG 4 AND METAL SLUG 5

Let loose the slugs of war!

→ If you want to know why the Metal Slug series owns 2D shooters in its back pocket, turn to page 88 and check out Metal Slug, our game of the month review.

Just so there isn't any confusion, Metal Slug 3 kicks the pants off these two pseudosequels (4 and 5 uses a lot of recycled art). And although neither game can compare

to the ingenious branching levels and 2D sprite design of Metal Slug 3, the compilation does feature two slightly underated and mostly ignored arcade-perfect ports. As

with Metal Slug 3, expect plenty of unlockable content, two new characters to the franchise, and Xbox Live support for top-score leader boards. //



PUSH START

## MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES VOLUME 2

Unearth these ultraviolet classics

→ While you may not always play the games on these retro-fit compilations, the Midway Arcade Treasures series serves as important documentary on the fall of Western civilization—beginning with Mortal

Kombat. Volume 2 features 20 other corruptive hits, including Cyberball 2072, NARC, Hard Drivin', STUN Runner, and, our personal favorite old-school brawler, Pit Fighter—a game so bad, it's actually good. //



## ULTRA BUST-A-MOVE

This here's a tale for all the fellas...

→ As you can gather from the above screenshot, Ultra Bust-A-Move has absolutely nothing to do with Young MC or the shaking of any Polaroid pictures. But those familiar with

this vintage puzzle series will be happy to hear that its Xbox debut will be hosted on Live for multiplayer. Addictive and saccharine sweet, Bust-A-Move remains timeless good fun. //

# FUTURE

BITE-SIZED PREVIEWS AND ODDITIES

# MEGA BITS

Little satellites of love on the horizon



## Otogi 2

Perhaps that localization dance we've been doing for the past six months has finally paid off, because Sega has decided to bring Otogi's supernatural flora to Xbox this fall. Sequel to last year's sleeper of mayhem and giddy destruction, *Otogi 2* continues its myth with six playable demigods and twice as many levels and challenges. This game is digital proof that inspired art direction can make a good game great. //

CMM  
DEV: From Software PUB: Sega REL: Fall

## Def Jam: Fight for NY

Not exactly helping to divorce the association between hip-hop and thug violence—but pop-culturally fascinating nonetheless—*Def Jam* exemplifies EA's total grasp of knowing exactly where to tickle the youth of today. New to this year's brawl is EA's signature concept of creating your own fighter, then imbuing him or her with a mix of martial styles, be it Muay Thai, kung fu, or wrestling. //

CMM  
DEV: AKQA with EA Canada PUB: Electronic Arts REL: Fall

## Episode III game in the works

Xbox Nation recently learned a few things about the highly anticipated (and equally dreaded) *Star Wars: Episode III*. Sources say there will be no less than seven lightsaber battles—two of which will pit Yoda in an epic光劍-knife fight of double-blades and Count Dooku. The Episode III game will be a third-person action title starring Obiwan and Anakin.



## Godzill: Save the Earth

Whether you're hip to sun-bleached nostalgia or wacky rubber monster suits is entirely beside the point: *Godzill*'s very concept—that of a 50-foot monstrosity who devours the planet from the cosmically homeless—transcends the very notion of cool. His latest adventures on Xbox take him from San Francisco to Tokyo Bay to do battle with King Ghidorah, Gigan, Mothra, and their aging friends. Xbox live multiplayer is expected. //

CMM  
DEV: Pipeworks PUB: Alert REL: Fall

## Citizen Zero

Xbox Nation has been eyeing *Citizen Zero* for quite a while now, mostly because the notion of a massively multiplayer online RPG with heavy action elements borrowed from the likes of *Halo* has given us plenty of daydream fodder. But there's just one catch: Zero is still in the process of signing with a publisher after being dropped by Microsoft earlier this year. We've played the game, and it rocks. A definite killer app on Xbox Live. //

CMM  
DEV: Micro Forte PUB: TBA REL: Winter

## Notorious: Die to Drive

Hip-hop joins World War II as the next big played-out phenomenon. As fast as EA's hip-hop brawler, Ubisoft cranks the *Thugg-Meter* up to 11 with *Notorious*, a vehicular combat game set in the world of gangsters and hobs. Although we'll reserve judgement until we're popping "mad caps" for the almighty glory that is the "bling bling." *Notorious* looks, at this early stage, like a ridiculous proposition. Ridiculously fun, that is. //

CMM  
DEV: Ubisoft PUB: Ubisoft REL: Spring 2005

## Samurai Warriors

Not since John Beaufort during his Saturday Night Live days has samurai frenzy been so evident amid the populace. Koel's tactical action game *Samurai Warriors* combines frantic (and joyous) real-time killing with RPG elements. Set in Japan's Warring States period in the late 1500s, the game lets players fight as legendary heroes and asks them to button-mash their way to victory. See also *Dynasty Warriors*. //

CMM  
DEV: Koel P&L PUB: Koel REL: Summer

**Square Enix eyes Xbox 2**

Rumors on the Internet indicate that Square Enix, godfathers of Final Fantasy and Dragon Quest, are planning to support Xbox 2, thanks to an "evolution" of business attitudes within Microsoft's games division.

**Second Sight**

→ Owning, perhaps, to certain psychic powers of their own, the folks over at Free Radical have made a game about mental warfare with an alarming canniness to Psi-Ops, a game we blew a foot-page wad on over two issues ago. Although more cinematic in its storytelling, Sight features the same sophisticated physics gameplay of Psi-Ops, only with a more plausible twist—you play as a patient on the lam from evil hospital wardens. //

Critic

DEV: Free Radical PUB: Codemasters REL: Fall

**EA readies for next gen**

During a recent industry analyst conference call, Electronic Arts announced that it would have four to six titles ready for the launch of Xbox 2 (the system itself will likely see release sometime in 2006).

**OutRun 2**

→ OutRun 2 is taking the long way to Xbox, by way of British developer Sumo Digital. If the notion of anyone but AM2 working on Sega's road-trip opus bothers you, don't worry, the outlook on the home conversion is good. Sumo's team of infographics vets is adding a four-player link mode, some form of Xbox Live support, as well as unlockable extras. Eight Ferraris and drift-o-matic handling make OutRun 2 appealing indeed. //

Critic

DEV: Sumo Digital PUB: Sega REL: Fall

**After Doom**

Technologists id Software recently announced that, after Doom 3, the studio is ready to take on a brand new franchise.

**Castlevania on Xbox Next?**

Over drinks and a fat stogie at a nightclub on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, Castlevania producer Koji Igarashi told *Xbox Nation*, after work is completed on his current project (*Nimrod*, based on *PS2*), he plans to bring the Castlevania series to the game development sector.

**TimeSplitters: Future Perfect**

→ TimeSplitters, as a series, acquired its claim to fame by hailing itself as an FPS from (some of) the creators behind seminal Nintendo 64 shooter *GoldenEye*. While the series hasn't exactly lived up to such pedigree, the love-it-or-hate-it *TimeSplitters* games are fun if not shallow on narrative. *Future Perfect* looks to continue the series' signature look and feel, even while it incubates under the watchful eye of EA. //

Critic

DEV: Free Radical PUB: Electronic Arts REL: Fall

**Spikeout: Battle Street**

→ It's not exactly the *Streets of Rage* revival nostalgic fanboys desire, but *Battle Street* sure looks and feels a lot like the classic Genesis series. A sequel to a little-seen networked arcade brawler, *Battle Street* lets you and three buds take down rival gangs over Live. Customizable characters and downloadable content should help alleviate the traditionally shallow nature of *Battle Street's* punch-em-up gameplay. //

Critic

DEV: Sega AV PUB: Sega REL: Fall

**Delta Force: Black Hawk Down**

→ PC leftovers are often delicious; in the case of *Ghost Hawk Down* on Xbox, you'll get the arcade action of the original, plus multiplayer on Xbox Live for up to 16 players and four-player splitscreen deathmatch. Based on a tragic real-life incident in 1993, *down* drops you off onto the dusty streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, for—quite literally—nonstop first-person action. Warning: may be offensive to some Somalians. //

Critic

DEV: Novologic PUB: Novologic REL: Fall

**Ghost Master**

→ "Exercise your demons," promotional material for *Ghost Master* proclaims. As the spiritual director of all things spectral, players must direct their spook-army to scare the living bejeezus out of humans. Gameplay, which blends elements of adventure and resource management, can be viewed through the eyes of ghosts of humans. *Xbox Nation* heartily recommends making the toilets bleed—it gets them every time. //

Critic

DEV: Sick Puppies PUB: Empire REL: Summer

FUTURE

PARIAH

# PARIAH

Unreal creators venture into brave new world

Digital Extremes knows a thing or two about first-person shooters. Back in 1998, during days commonly referred to now as "the time before Half-Life," the studio released Unreal, a seminal FPS that combined cutting-edge technology with cinematic storytelling.

Unreal marked a turning point in the FPS genre, where suddenly plot and context were just as important as eye candy. A distinction emerged between arena-style shooters like Quake and Doom, which pursued a pure twitch reflex philosophy, and newcomer Unreal—a game whose only goal was to create the ultimate single-player experience.

Ironically, the debut would also be Digital Extremes' last single-player game in the Unreal universe. Subsequent work from the

developer has focused on multiplayer in an effort to out-Quake Quake II. Now, six years and five games later, Digital Extremes is ready to get back to its design roots with a new franchise—Pariah.

"The name itself comes from a game we were going to create right after *Unreal*," James Schmalz, founder and creative director of Digital Extremes, says. "But the game has evolved quite a bit [since]. The core of the idea stems from the desire to go back and focus on a single-player experience, yet still deliver great multiplayer."

Flung far into a dystopian future, you play Jack Mason, a doctor whose will to live is reawakened when he survives a fatal transport crash. Now stranded in a brutal prison wasteland called "Earth" with a handful of infected patients, Jack has to race

against time to escape the ill-fated planet. "I hate playing FPS games where the only thing that drives you forward is a thin story, another weapon, and a slightly different monster," Schmalz says.

To concoct the best single-player experience possible, Schmalz and his team aren't just integrating story into gameplay, but also perfecting "emergent tactical AI" for dynamic, unpredictable scenarios. Aside from acting much like a human would, the AI will also drive vehicles and work with and against you in squads.

Pariah's gameplay will feature other innovations, too, like using your senses to hunt down enemies or customizing your firearms. On the whole, pacing for the game will be more akin to a first-person survival adventure, like our favorite game last month, *The Chronicles of Riddick*. Schmalz believes that's where the genre can break virgin territory.

"FPS games really need to start delivering on the story side," Schmalz says. "They need to deliver a more emotional experience and [tie it in with] interesting gameplay elements. We're creating a game with the whole package [in mind]." //



## GAME

GAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	LIVE
100 Bullets	Acclaim	October	No
25 to Life	Eidos	Fall	TBA
Advent Rising	Maverick	September	TBA
Ares 51	Midway	September	TBA
B.C.	Microsoft	Fall	No
Backyard Wrestling 2	Eidos	Fall	No
Bad Boys 2	Empire Interactive	Summer	No
Bard's Tale	Acclaim	October	No
Battlefield: Modern Combat	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
Delta Force: Black Hawk Down	Novelsoft	Fall	Yes
Black	TBA	22/05	TBA
Blinx 2	Microsoft	Fall	Yes
BloodRayne 2	Majesco	October	No
Brothers in Arms	Ubisoft	Fall	Yes
Carnival 3	Electronic Arts	September	Yes
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activation	Fall	TBA
Catwoman	Electronic Arts	July	No
Citizen Zero	TBA	TBA	Yes
Close Combat: First to Fight	Take 2	Winter	TBA
Colin McRae Rally 2005	Codemasters	Fall	Yes
Combat Elite: White Paratroopers	Acclaim	June	No
Conflict: Vietnam	Gathering	Fall	No
Conker: Live and Urkut	Microsoft	Fall	Yes
Cross 'N Burn	Eidos	Fall	Yes
Daredevil	Encore	Summer	No
Dark Sector	Groove Games	TBA 2006	TBA
Darkwatch	Sunmy	December	Yes
DDR UltraMix 2	Konami	Fall	Yes
Dead or Alive Code: Crimson	Tecmo	TBA	TBA
Dead or Alive Ultimate	Techno	Summer	Yes
Dead Rush	Activision	Winter	No
Dead to Rights II: Hell to Pay	Namco	Fall	TBA
Def Jam Fight for New York	Electronic Arts	Fall	No
Destroy All Humans	THQ	Spring 2005	No
Snowblind	Eidos	Winter	Yes
Dom 3	Activation	Fall	Yes
DRIV3R	Atari	June	No
Day of the Hazard	Ubisoft	October	No
ESPN NBA 2005	Sage	Fall	Yes
ESPN NFL 2005	Sage	Fall	Yes
ESPN NHL 2005	Sage	Fall	Yes
Fable	Microsoft	Summer	TBA
Fahrenheit	Vivendi	Winter	No
Fay Cry Instincts	Ubisoft	TBA	Yes
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	Fall	No
FIFA 2005	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
Fight Club	Vivendi	Winter	TBA
FlatOut	Empire Interactive	Fall	Yes
Forza Motorsport	Microsoft	Winter	Yes
Full Spectrum Warrior	THQ	Now	Yes
Galleon	SCI	TBA	No
Get On Da Floor	Eidos	Fall	No
Get On Da Mic	Eidos	Fall	No
Ghost Master	Empire Interactive	Fall	No
Ghost Recon 2	Ubisoft	Fall	Yes
Godzilla: Save the Earth	Atari	Fall	No
Goldfene: Rogue Agent	Electronic Arts	TBA	No
Guilty Gear X2 #Reload	Majesco	Fall	Yes
Halo 2	Microsoft	November	Yes
Jackalote 4x4	X5 Games	TBA	No
Jane Foster and the Prisoner of Arkham	Electronic Arts	Winter	No
HeadsUp! Redemption	Sega	Fall	No
Heroes of the Pacific	Encore	Winter	Yes
Iron Phoenix	Sunmy	Fall	Yes
Jade Empire	Microsoft	Winter	No
Joint Operations	Novelsoft	TBA	Yes
Juiced	Acclaim	Fall	Yes
Karma Elements of Power	Microsoft	September	No
Kingdoms Under Fire: The Crusaders	Midway	TBA	Yes
Knight of the Old Republic 2	LucasArts	Winter	Yes
Legends of Wrestling: Showdown	Acclaim	June	No
Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude	Vivendi	TBA	No
Madden 2005	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
Malice	Bethesda	Fall	TBA
Marvel vs. Electronic Arts	Electronic Arts	Winter 2005	TBA
Maxis ATW	Metro3d	September	No
MechAssault 2: Lone Wolf	Microsoft	Winter	Yes

## GAME

GAME	PUBLISHER	RELEASE	LIVE
Men of Valor: Vietnam	Vivendi	Winter	Yes
Mercenaries	LucasArts	Fall	TBA
Metal Slug 3	SNK	Summer	No
Metal Slug 4 & 5	SNK	Fall	Yes
Battle for Midway	Cap	Spring 2005	Yes
MetalWolf Chaos	TBA	Fall	TBA
Midway Arcade Treasures Vol. 2	Midway	Fall	No
Mortal Kombat: Deception	Midway	Fall	Yes
NARC	Midway	Spring 2005	Yes
NASCAR 2005	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
NBA Live 2005	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
NCAA 2005	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
NCAA Football 2005	Electronic Arts	Summer	Yes
Need for Speed Underground 2	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
NHL 2005	Electronic Arts	Fall	Yes
Notorious: Die to Drive	Ubisoft	Fall	Yes
Operation Flashpoint	Codemasters	Fall	Yes
Overline 2	Sega	Fall	No
Outrun Golf 2	Simon & Schuster	Summer	Yes
Outrun 2	Sega	Fall	Yes
Painkiller	Dreamcatcher	Fall	Yes
Pariah	Groove Games	Fall	Yes
Perfect Dark Zero	Microsoft	TBA 2005	Yes
Plague of Darkness	Namco	Fall	No
Predator: Concrete Jungle	Vivendi	Fall	No
Prince of Persia 2	Microsoft	Winter	TBA
Ps-Ops: The Hindgate Conspiracy	Midway	Summer	No
Pyromaniacs	Ubisoft	Winter	No
Rainbow Six: Black Arrow	Vivendi	August	Yes
Red Ninja: End of Honor	Gathering	Fall	No
Robotech: Invasion	Ubisoft	Fall	No
Rocky Legends	TBA	Fall	No
Sahara	Samurai Shodown 5 Special	Fall	Yes
Samurai Warriors	Koei	Summer	No
Scalder	TOK	Winter	No
Second Sight	Codemasters	Fall	No
Shadow Ops: Red Mercury	Alaris	June	Yes
Starship: Monsters vs. Humans	Metro3d	October	No
Shrek 2:楠木 67	Eidos	TBA	No
Shrek 2	Activation	Summer	No
Silent Hill 4	Konami	Fall	Yes
SNK vs. Capcom SVC Chaos	SNK	Fall	Yes
Spider-Man 2	Activision	June	No
Spidekout: Battle Street	Sega	Fall	Yes
Splinter Cell 3	Ubisoft	TBA 2005	Yes
St5	Namco	Fall	Yes
Star Wars: Battlefront	LucasArts	Fall	Yes
Star Wars: Republic Commando	LucasArts	Fall	Yes
StarCraft: Ghost	Blizzard	Fall	No
State of Emergency 2	Bom!	Winter	TBA
Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	Capcom	Fall	Yes
Street Racing Syndicate	Namco	Fall	No
Sudoki	Microsoft	Fall	No
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	THQ	Fall	No
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2	Konami	Fall	No
Terminator 3: Redemption	Atari	Summer	No
Test Drive: Eye of Destruction	Atari	Fall	No
The Chronicles of Riddick	Vivendi	Now	Yes
The Fast and the Furious	Vivendi	Winter	No
The Incredibles	THQ	Fall	No
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	Electronic Arts	Winter	No
The Movie!	Activation	Winter	No
The Parasite	THQ	Fall	No
The Red Star	Acclaim	October	No
The Shield	Sunmy	Winter	No
The Sims 2004	Electronic Arts	Fall	TBA
The Urbz: Sims in the City	Electronic Arts	Fall	No
Thief: Deadly Shadows	Activision	Now	No
TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	Electronic Arts	Spring 2005	TBA
Tony Hawk's Underground 2	Activation	Fall	Yes
Tron 2.0: Killer App	Buena Vista Games	Fall	Yes
True Fantasy Live Online	Microsoft	Spring 2005	Yes
Ultra Bust-a-Move	Majesco	Fall	Yes
Unreal Championship 2	Microsoft	Fall	Yes
X-Men Legends	Activation	May	No
Yankee	PlayLogic	Fall	No

# X RATED

SMART REVIEWS JULY 2004

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## JUST LIKE HONEY

In the summer's heat, things pour slowly and with a little sweetness

The trend continues. During the slow game months, players can look forward to summer movie tie-ins (*Shrek 2*, *Van Helsing*), odd little sports games (*MLB SlugFest: Loaded*), and all the stuff that would probably get swallowed up had it been released at any other time (*Red Dead Revolver*, *Manhunt*).

It's a good time to take a deep breath, look forward, and then peer back, so this month *Xbox Nation* does all three at once. Amid the

reviews, there's an in-depth wrap-up of all the year's baseball offerings, from *MVP Baseball 2004* to *All-Star Baseball 2005*. See how each of this year's contenders to the throne stands up in the harsh light of unwavering criticism.

The chicken entrails predict great things for *Xbox* in the coming months. Among the tantalizing offerings are *Doom 3*, *Halo 2*, *Febe*, *BC*, and *Silent Hill 4*. Not content to wait, *XBN* enlisted the help of a world-class psychic to read the

signs and foretell the future for some of *Xbox*'s hottest but-not-yet-released offerings. The alignment of Jupiter coupled with the waning of Mercury foretells a wonderful read. Just remember that all predictions are made solely for entertainment purposes.

Next month, the stars predict more reviews, one of which will be THQ's much-anticipated strategy/shooter *Full Spectrum Warrior*.

## JULY X RATED AWARDS

### Game of the Month



**Metal Slug 3**  
SNK/Playmore

In a hotly contested fight, the delectable 2D shooter *Metal Slug 3* narrowly edged out *MLB SlugFest: Loaded* for the coveted "Slug of the Month" award. Well done!

### GOTM Runner-up



**MLB SlugFest: Loaded**  
Midway

For meritorious slugging, *Xbox Nation* awards the Slug of the Month Runner-up prize to Midway for its suitably wacky online baseball game *MLB SlugFest: Loaded*.

### Plastic But Deadly Award



**Manhunt**  
Rockstar Games

You know how it says, "Warning: To avoid danger of suffocation, keep this plastic bag away from babies and children," on plastic bags? It doesn't say don't use it on a man...

### Ultimate Topper Award



**Van Helsing**  
Vivendi/Universal

*Van Helsing* has a really great hat. When it's knocked off, monsters will put it on. A bonus is awarded for finishing a stage with the hat on. So. What's with the hat?



## LAST MONTH'S HIT OR MISS →



The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay



Mafia: Gotham

"The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay is one of the best exclusives in the Xbox library," the review text read. Just reread that sentence for maximum effect.

Had it not been displaced by a more deserving game, *Mafia* for Xbox certainly would have won the Badfellas Award. Play the PC version of *Mafia* instead. It's a lot better.

## MAKING THE GRADE

The score's the thing...

→ Celebrate greatness. Flush video feces. This is the mandate Xbox Nation game reviewers are given and the philosophy its critics operate under. XGN strives to be harsh but fair in its scoring; with games costing upwards of \$50, no one benefits from reviews with padded scores, least of all you.

Breaking down review grades, you'll find a game with a score of one is Satan's bestdild. Two indicates raw sewage. Three is embarrassing. Four is flawed. Five equals average. Six is all right.

Seven is good, eight great. Nine is excellent, and 10 out of 10 is truly great, and as near to a perfect experience as it's possible to get.

### XBOX LIVE

→ Look for this handy-dandy box describing a game's Xbox Live content. As always, Xbox Live content will be factored in to achieve a holistic final grade.

# RED DEAD REVOLVER

PUBLISHER Rockstar Games | DEVELOPER Rockstar Games | PLAYERS 1-4 | LIVE Yes | MGR: \$49.99 | R 1569 | K

## Unforgiven

 Long after sundown, Red Dead Revolver rides into town riddled with holes. This oft-delayed third-person bullet-filled ballet is a bumpy ride—a reflection, perhaps, of its unusual heritage. First fanned out by Capcom to Angel Studios (which is now under the Rockstar umbrella), the game's since been picked up, partially polished, and promptly put out on store shelves, reeking of ambitious odds and ends left unfinished.

### The Good: He's got character...

At the heart of this tale of revenge is the titular Red—a good kid orphaned by bad men—who shoots through scores of yellow-toothed yellowbellies along the way. A cast of supporting characters—including a disgraced soldier, a sassy rancher, and Red's Indian cousin—join him along the way, each takes the limelight for a single chapter (some of the better-looking levels, actually), brandishing their own signature sidearms and special

techniques.

Technically solid if ultimately unambitious, Revolver sports no shortage of style; Rockstar Games has indisputably mastered how to co-opt clichés (perfect for a genre game like this one) and has always had an irrefutable way with lowlifes, to boot. There's no shortage of knock-kneed, foul-mouthed, funny fascinating miscreants to perforate. The score—which features a number of tracks licensed from the spaghetti westerns of the '60s and '70s—is suitably evocative, and even though the game's not much to look at in terms of textures, polygons, or animation, many visual details have been lovingly lavished with attention.

### The Bad: ...but he's a little rough around the edges...

Given the Western backdrop, Revolver features an impressive variety of sun-bleached outposts, menacing canyons, and verdant farms. Sadly, the levels tend to be short-lived affairs; seasoned gamers will blow through the single-player story mode in less than a day, which

doesn't give you much bang for your buck. Detrimental design decisions mar the experience further: Most enemies can survive several shots to the face, a player's death leads to an annoyingly anachronistic 10-second countdown timer (better left in the arcade), the menus are curiously unintuitive, and even worse, there's no option to go back and replay memorable shoot-outs after the story mode has been beaten.

### The Ugly: ...and shallow

The story mode's shortcomings aside, the biggest offender here is that there's ultimately little else to do—even the ubiquitous multiplayer mode is pretty anemic stuff. The option to unlock and use the game's

Pluggin' galoots and shootin' varmints builds character.



**WANTED: DEAD OR ON XBOX LIVE**

→ Red Dead Revolver's cowboy-dueling motif certainly seems perfect for online play, but it's pretty clear that the developer's assets were limited in this and many other respects—other than the obligatory Xbox Live aware feature, it's elbow-to-elbow split-screen play only. Once players have tired of shooting their friends and rooting through the game's exhaustive listing of people, places, and events, they can analyze their own stats (a Rockstar staple), including number of combats, distance traveled on foot and by horse, accuracy, favorite weapons, and other such trivial matters. Interestingly enough, there's no stat for number of hours played—for many gunslinging couch potatoes, it could prove to be a far less impressive number.

**It's like lookin' into the ugly mirror.**

**SHOOTIN'  
SCHOOL**

↳ *Red Dead Revolver* tries hard to impart the top-cool sensation of being a gunslinger. Players will make liberal use of the dead-eye mode, which enables players to slow time and preload a number of targets before opening fire. Unfortunately, that six-gun staple, the duel, is more unwieldy than empowering. At the scripted confrontations when dueling is called for, the four-part procedure (grabbing the gun, drawing the gun, drawing a bead, and then firing) is skillless. The subtleties are there, but they're hard to detect, giving the whole affair an unrewarding feel.



many miscreants—from the machine-gun-in-a-coffin-toting Mr. Black to the buck-toothed, barrel-clad Cooper—is nifty, but modes (point-and-time-based, as well as dueling) are few; the only innovative inclusion is an unengaging variation of poker played by pistoleers. An exhaustive, elaborately illustrated journal has hundreds of entries to be unlocked (by finding a seemingly endless array of knickknacks), but only the most persistent of hoarders and pack rats will see this as anything more than a thinly veiled sideshow diverting attention from Revolver's mostly meager thrills.

Strip away the somberude, spurs, and signature Rockstar sass, and what's left is an average third-person shoot-em-up some gallons shy of a 10-gallon hat. And with more eloquently executed games such as the grossly under-appreciated *Kill Switch* and *Metal Arms*, *A Glitch in the System*—populating the genre, this is an exemplary reason to try before you buy. //

David Chen

**XBN 06**

OUT OF TEN

# MANHUNT

PUBLISHER Rockstar Games // DEVELOPER Rockstar North // PLAYERS 1 // LIVE No // MSRP \$49.99 // ESRB M

## The most dangerously dull game

**Manhunt** was meant to be the big PlayStation 2 game last fall, one that would make Senator Joe Lieberman's hair catch on fire, inspire irate mothers to march on Rockstar's corporate headquarters, and sell like hotcakes to rebellious teens. To everyone's surprise, none of this happened.

What went wrong? Rockstar North made sure to include all the controversy-generating hot spots,

after all. As death-row convict James Earl Cash, you've been thrown into an abandoned city by Mr. Starkweather, a rich maniac who gets his kicks by filming people like you getting killed by roving gangs of thugs. The world Cash sneaks through is dark, dreary, and scary in a Silent Hill sort of way—miles of dingy streets and corridors, hordes of lunatics shouting at you, and Starkweather intoning instructions into your ear via the Xbox Communicator. That's creepy enough, but the stealth kills Cash executes on these loons—decapitations and bits of brain flying toward the camera—are enough to make you squirm in your seat.

It's this uncomfortable-yet incredibly immersive-game world that makes *Manhunt* seem like such

a new experience...and what should've made it such a target for news-media hatred. Unfortunately, the game itself isn't up to the standard. Bashing a guy with a baseball bat is fun the first time, but there's nothing here to break the monotony of the stealth action. The new mission types near the end aren't much help, either—they just take a boring experience and make it frustrating. Despite the boldness of the exterior, *Manhunt* is just another stealth game at its core. Worse, it's a stealth game that dramatically overstates its welcome. //

**Kevin Gifford**

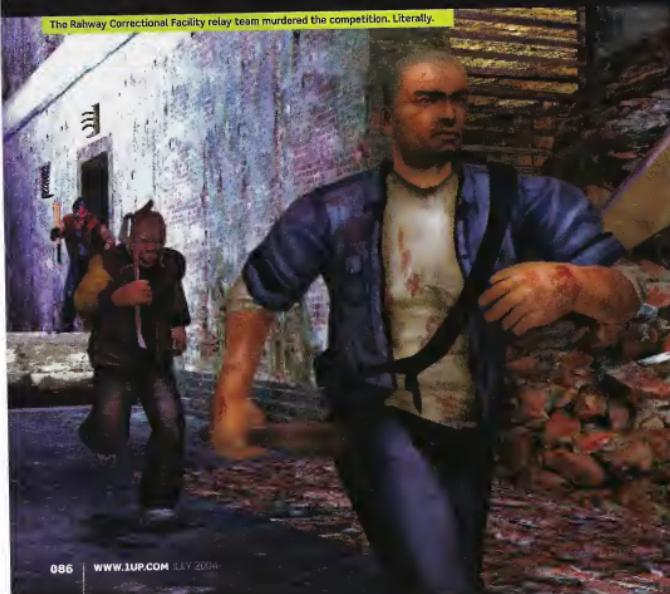
**XBN 05**  
OUT OF TEN

### MANHUNT ON XBOX:

→ The Xbox *Manhunt* is visibly prettier than the PlayStation 2 version—clearer textures, surround sound, and widescreen support make the unsettling experience all that more immersive for hardcore gamers. Expect an occasional bout of framerate drop in exchange, however.



The Rahway Correctional Facility relay team murdered the competition. Literally.



# XTENDED FAMILY

Air flows, cords blow, and the controllers say, "Let there be light!"

## AIR FLO EX

NYKO \$29.99



**Pros:** Fan, responsive controls

**Cons:** Could break in a week, weight

↳ Nyko's second-generation Air Flo EX controller may be just what you need in your hot little hands. Like the original, this controller features a fan that pushes air out through the unit's grips, perfect if you suffer from sweaty hands. Great concept, right? Well, it is and it was, except that the first generation's left analog stick broke after a week, and the fan stopped soon after that. But the new Air Flo EX renewes faith in both the concept and the execution. The fan now has two settings: an effective slower speed and a super blow-every-bit-of-moisture-off-your-hands speed for slippery situations. But all this tech does have a price; it's heavier than the original controller, but when the fan kicks in and your hands stay dry, it's a dead issue. Overall, the controls seem highly responsive, and, well, it has a fan. //

## WIRELESS NIGHT

MOVES DANCE PAD

PELICAN ACCESSORIES \$39.95

**Pros:** Duh, wireless! Defies expectations by actually working

**Cons:** Tough to get a line of sight in a crowded living room. The dance pad part is still just average

↳ This product, which can only be used with Konami's *Dance Dance Revolution Ultramix*, simultaneously seems like a disastrous idea and one whose time has come. The great news is that the wireless part isn't actually a disaster. Move it around as much as you want, and as long as you have a line of sight with the receiver, you'll have complete control. It's still a fairly flimsy controller, though—wireless can't change that. Despite its advertised supergrip material, it still moves around plenty, and the quilting that's supposed to prevent the pad from bunching hurts if you step on it wrong. But if you don't want to spend a ton of money, this one 1) works and 2) glows in the dark. //



## THEY MADE THIS?

No, really, someone made this...

### Lumicon controller

Mad Catz \$29.99

↳ Plugging the Mad Catz Lumicon controller into your Xbox home videogame console ensures two things: 1) You will be adequately defended against the darkness; and 2) You will feel vaguely ridiculous playing games with a glowing gamepad. In addition to its role as a highly functional Xbox controller possessing rubber handgrips and a programmable macro button, the Lumicon also serves as an illumination source with its LEDs acting as a bulwark against spooky nighttime terrors. Sturdily made and comfortable to use, Lumicon reminds us all that there is room for both well-executed design and bewildering technology. //



**X RATED**

METAL SLUG 3 // MLB SLUGFEST: LOADED

PRESS START



# METAL SLUG 3

PUBLISHER: SNK // DEVELOPER: SNK Playmore // PLAYERS: 1-4 // LIVE: No // MSRP: \$29.99 // ESRB: T

## Slugging it out, one grunt at a time

For stalwart 2D gaming advocates everywhere, the ultimate weapon has just arrived. Behold Metal Slug 3—one of the finest, purest, and most hardcore 2D shooters on any system to date.

Released years ago as an arcade title on SNK's long-running Neo Geo system, Slug 3 is the seminal side-scrolling series at the peak of its form. As the final game in the trilogy from the original Metal Slug team at SNK (subsequent sequels have been handled by Korean developer Mega and SNK's new proprietors Playmore), Slug 3 embodies perfectly the visceral, over-the-top gunplay and visual witticisms of the series—minus the quarter-pumping.

It's meant to be played together with a partner; you and a friend choose from four playable characters and ravage six long, obsessively detailed levels of

pixelized chaos with an assortment of delectable arms. Like many of ye olde 2D shooters from a bygone era, the gameplay is undeniably straightforward. Shoot what moves and avoid conversations with bullets.

What makes Slug 3 so delightful, then, is the combination of many subtle elements, least of which being its fluid animation and visual nods to various sci-fi and classic gaming references. It truly boggles the mind to think that once upon a time, some incredibly talented digital painter sat chained to a desk at SNK studios and painstakingly animated every creature on this beautiful, mesmerizing canvas.

Like all great shoot-em-ups, each of Slug 3's six levels, while initially overwhelmed with enemies and seemingly random bullets, can be mastered (and memorized) with practice. In fact, there's no other way of reaching Slug 3's hilarious



denouement.

Along with a deceptively steep learning curve, the proceedings are padded nicely by exclusive content in the form of two brand-new levels. More importantly, Playmore has done a wonderful job of balancing the series' penchant for quarter-munching with a continue system allowing you to slowly unlock the rest of the game as a reward for true mastery. Herein lies the true art of war, done very well, thank you. //

Che Chou

**XBN 08**  
OUT OF TEN

# MLB SLUGFEST: LOADED

PUBLISHER Midway // DEVELOPER Midway // PLAYERS: 1-2 // LIVE: Yes // MSR: \$39.99 // ISBN: T

## Baseball Abner Doubleday never dreamed of

The wacky baseball sort-of-simulator *MLB SlugFest* is back for another inning, and this time it comes "loaded" with extras. Pardon the horrible pun.

*MLB SlugFest: Loaded* now packs Xbox Live compatibility with voice chat. Here, *SlugFest* wins points; the series excels as multiplayer fare, and Live play adds greatly to the

package. *Loaded* also updates its palette with expanded commentary, more customization options, and an in-depth franchise mode.

Gameplay dynamics remain as simple as ever. As a hitter, there is a conspicuous box on the screen to indicate the strike zone. You're given four ways to hit the ball via four face buttons on the controller. Get a base

hit and you can sock an infielder to make him drop the ball (an absurd but satisfying embellishment). Pitching is straightforward, too—you utilize the same four face buttons to throw pitches. There are also trick pitches that come in ultrafast or curve wildly in all directions.

The visuals and ambient sounds are crisp, but that's been a hallmark of the series since its inception. In fact, the game, save for its cosmetic changes and the addition of online play, remains more or less the same as it ever was: goofy and at times over the top. It's an acquired taste, but one that's ultimately well crafted and capable of being enjoyed with a friend or a hated rival across the country via online play. //

Jason Allen

ProTip: A little nitroglycerin on the ball works wonders.

**XBN 07**  
OUT OF TEN**XBOX LIVE:**

Xbox Live in *MLB SlugFest: Loaded* lets players set up tournaments by way of *Tsunami*, Microsoft's new online technology. Updatable rosters and friend-saving functionality are also present, and a ticker tape scrolls across the screen, giving live scores of current contests. Midway hopes to incorporate franchise mode into Xbox Live functionality for its next *SlugFest*.

## VERSUS MODE

Each month, two games duel to the death

If horse racing is the sport of kings, then wrestling is definitely the sports entertainment of, as "Classy" Freddie Blasie said, pencil-necked geeks. This month, *Xbox Nation* puts two of the Xbox's finest—finest being a relative term, of course—

wrestling games against each other.

This month, it's the old school versus the new: *Legends of Wrestling II* versus *Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home*. Let's have a nice, clean fight, and may the lesser of two evils emerge triumphant.

*Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home*



*Legends of Wrestling II*

VS.

	Implied threat:	Bad clown(s):	Your ultimate goal:	Sex appeal:	FINAL VERDICT:
<i>Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home</i>	Don't try this at home	Insane Clown Posse	To become the King of Wrestling. In your mom's backyard.	Catchgirl, queen and bear phenomenon Krista Baker	Bored scientists, mimes, and the recently deceased have nothing better than this to do. It's a little bit like golf, but instead of all those balls, there are games pitted against each other in a duel to the death! And the answer is yes, it's more fun, that is, if yes, it's more fun.
<i>Legends of Wrestling II</i>	What are you going to do when a grappler from 1973 runs wild on you?	Andy Kaufman	To step into the ring with confidence against, and ultimately beat a wrestler who's been dead for 43 years.	Sweaty Hall Hogan and "Elbowing" King Kong Bundy	
<b>THE WINNER:</b> <i>Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home</i>	Backyard Wrestling: Also, do not try this where anyone can see you.	Legends of Wrestling II: Comedy thy name was not Kaufman.	Backyard Wrestling: Mom would be proud to see you wearing a cape and getting beaten with a steel chair.	Backyard Wrestling: Enough said.	

# SHREK 2

PUBLISHER: Activision // DEVELOPER: LuxoBox // PLAYERS: 1-4 // LIVE: No // MSRP: \$49.99 // ESRB: E

Delightful pun alert: Ogre the hills and far away...

Shrek 2 marks a departure for electronic entertainment based on the Shrek license: It's no longer the ogre of videogames. That's not to say it's great, but neither is it the worst game in the world, either.

Shrek 2 is beautiful, holding a superb interface and diverse gameplay. Another high-water mark for Shrek games is its actual laugh-out-loud moments, which extend

from one-liners to comical scenarios. The problem is its uneven difficulty: The simple sections will alienate experienced gamers, but the game can be too difficult for beginners. Much of the action is dead-on simple, with hints doled out by magic mirrors and enemies destroyed by heartless button-mashing. It might be a top game for the grade-school set if it weren't for some genuinely difficult spots, including teeth-

gnashingly aggravating jumping puzzles and boss battles.

Through most of the game, there are four controllable characters with different skill sets: Donkey has a killer "burro blast," while Shrek can pick up and carry items. Each character also feels unique in battle. Puss-in-Boots feels light and lithe as he slices enemies with his blade, while Shrek feels Hulk-like with his powerful smashes. The diversity, though one of the game's strengths, also becomes a hindrance, as characters not under player control sometimes get in the way.

Shrek 2 might be the perfect game for a family of game-players, though. In multiplayer mode, up to four players can each control a different character. If one member of the team can handle the game's hot spots, Shrek 2 could definitely gratify little children.

Carrie Shepherd



**XBN 06**  
OUT OF TEN

# HOME RUN DERBY



## MVP BASEBALL 2004

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts // DEVELOPER: Electronic Arts

Building on its predecessor's innovative pitching and throwing engine, MVP Baseball 2004 is the masterpiece of this year's lineup. The game's flaws are easily overshadowed by everything it does right.

### FEATURES/STRENGTHS:

The game wants you to pitch well, with a meter affecting the accuracy and power of each thrown ball—of course, that means you've gotta be on your toes for every pitch. The game also wants you to hit well, offering commentary and an overhead pop-up showing where you missed with your cut. Combining these features with unlockable old timers, AA and AAA teams, controllable slides, and a fine fielding engine, the game wants you to have a good time.

### BOX LIVE:

Welcome to the void that is online play. As with EA's other games, MVP receives no online support, a definite kick in the jocks trap.

### WEAKNESSES:

The franchise mode locks you in for the long haul; it's 162 games or nothing, plus all your team's minor league games. Needless to say, you'll become very familiar with the Sim(ulate) button.

### FINAL SCORE: 9 OUT OF 10

Say hello to the king—MVP is the best-playing game of the bunch, and its killer pitching engine makes it a must for would-be Greg Madduxes, although it may be a little too intense for casual fans. Truly, it's a game for solo players; Live addicts should look elsewhere.



So how does EA's game within the game work? When you choose your pitch, a bar in the pitch meter starts moving; release the button when the bar is near the end of the meter and your pitch is more effective. The bar swings back, and you must stop it within a thin green zone, which represents the pitch's accuracy. Nail both goals, and the pitch goes where you want with the juice you want. Miss, and you get breaking balls that don't break, sinkers that don't sink so much, and a small colored circle that lets the batter know where the ball is headed. If it's in his hot zone, kiss the ball good-bye. Every pitch, 27 outs—it's grueling, yet rewarding.



## ESPN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

PUBLISHER: Sega // DEVELOPER: Blue Shift

ESPN Major League Baseball is in the class of the more traditional games—you know, the o' point and chuck—offering a fine-tuned, highly customizable package.

### FEATURES/STRENGTHS:

The ESPN presentation—including the announcers, replays, in-game stat breakdowns—is phenomenal. The various modes can be tweaked to insane degrees, giving gamers the ability to have a 10-game season and a three-tier playoff series. The Turbo button may not be realistic, but it's useful when you're tracking down those gap shots.

### BOX LIVE:

ESPN is online, and it's solid, with no noticeable stuttering. The camera view is fixed, but at least it's a good one. Still, more options would have been appreciated, such as an online run derby or duel mode.

### WEAKNESSES:

Beyond the Confidence meter, which has no noticeable impact on gameplay. A pitcher with a double-digit lead will see his confidence drop after giving up a single. Fortunately, it doesn't affect the way he pitches. The AI occasionally auto-selects the wrong fielder, too.

### FINAL SCORE: 5 OUT OF 10

ESPN is a solid run-up to MVP. In some ways, it's more accessible, thanks to all the tweakable options and the fact that you don't have to be fully aware of every pitch you throw. Hitting is a little more lenient, too, and online play is most definitely a good thing.



Sega's first try at first-person sporting, ESPN NFL Football, met with less-than-stellar results. Baseball's a different beast, though, focused much more on 1-on-1 matchups, and first-person mode works much better here. If you turn on third-person batting—hitting in first person is disorienting—it's fun to run the bases through the player's eyes. Fielding can be tricky, especially with hard-hit balls (but you can turn on third-person mode here, too), but it's worth a shot. Especially fun: being in the pitcher's head, serving up a looong foul ball, then watching as his view jerks around as he turns his head to follow the mighty wallop.



## Xbox Nation rounds up the recent crop of baseball games...and picks a winner



### ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2005

PUBLISHER: Acclaim // DEVELOPER: Acclaim

Every Xbox Nation baseball roundup has to have a dog, and this year, ladies and gents, it's All-Star Baseball 2005. All told, it's more a comedy of errors than a game of balls and strikes.

#### FEATURES/STRENGTHS:

Creating a franchise, selecting a mascot and stadium, and managing personnel is fun. Unfortunately, you've still gotta play the game. The FielderCam's issues have some issues. One of the series' best features lets you relive memorable moments from the previous season to either re-create or change history. Wanna have Moises Alou catch the infamous (now-vaporized) Bartman ball? Have a blast...too bad the camera view is fixed-poory—and you have to reload the event each time you want to retry it.

#### XBOX LIVE:

Yep, but buggy and limited. For inexplicable reasons, the game is locked into a bad camera view. And plays at the plate prove iffy; even if the ball beats the runner by five steps, he's sometimes safe.

#### WEAKNESSES:

Weak animation, sketchy AI, inferior graphics, obtrusive stat overlays, an annoying running game, frustrating hitting, blah, blah, blah. Baseball 2005 ain't pretty, folks.

#### FINAL SCORE: 3 OUT OF 10

Baseball 2005 has fallen far behind the pack. Any attempt at innovation pales next to MVP, and online play is a joke with ESPN out there. It may be time for Acclaim to put the franchise out of its misery and send it to the great bush-league in the sky.



→ All Star  
Baseball 2005's  
FielderCam was  
supposed to be the  
series' saving grace,  
offering a fresh  
perspective on the  
action. Every time a  
ball is hit into play,  
the action zooms  
behind the  
appropriate fielder's  
shoulder, and an  
indicator pops up  
where the ball will  
land. This works  
great with a lazy fly  
to center, when the  
player has time to  
mosey on over to the  
appropriate spot. But  
any line drive hit with  
authority causes  
problems: The  
camera is too tight  
on the fielder, so any  
shots to either side  
are hard to follow,  
and you end up  
following arrows to  
the ball, which is  
about as easy as it  
sounds.



### MLB SLUGFEST: LOADED

PUBLISHER: Midway // DEVELOPER: Midway

This steroid-packed smashfest offers a nice change of pace...and more?

#### FEATURES/STRENGTHS:

Catching on fire, pummeling opposing players, ticker tape, cheerleaders—welcome to baseball in bizarro world. The announcers are entertaining and actually funny, and solid graphics and excellent animations keep things interesting. What would a warm summer's night be without a classic matchup between a team of aliens and a team of dolphins in Atlantis? There's a feature-packed franchise mode here, as well as a sim-oriented MLB mode, but do people who pick up this game even want them?

#### XBOX LIVE:

The most entertaining multiplayer game is online—a big plus—supporting tournaments, voice chat, and updateable rosters. Trash talking is just as satisfying over Live.

#### WEAKNESSES:

If not for the dangling carrot of the unlockables, gameplay can get stale, especially in single-player mode. The franchise mode is nice, sure, and it offers a lot of stats and all, but it just seems out of place. It's good to have the option, but it seems like a SlugFest player without a sonic fist is a SlugFest player who has lost his way.

#### FINAL SCORE: 7 OUT OF 10

Grab a bud and a Bud, and it's hard to have a better time. You will actually find yourself laughing while playing, and virtually anyone can pick up and play this and have a good time. This makes SlugFest the most accessible game of the fearless foursome. Thanks to its arcade-style play, it's in a class of its own.



→ Stuff you can  
poll off in *MLB  
SlugFest: Loaded*:  
Pitchers can try some  
new trick pitches, and  
batters can dodge  
potential beanballs  
(and avoid the  
accompanying stat  
hit). On the base  
paths, the runner can  
try to avoid an out by  
knocking the ball out  
of the fielder's glove  
or by power-sliding  
into the bag. And prepare for some  
serious collisions on  
plays at the plate.  
Still, it's the  
unlockables that add  
additional miles to  
SlugFest. Turn a  
double play, hit a  
home run in the right  
stadium, or guess the  
correct number of  
stolen bases to open  
up new teams and  
parks. Most unlockables  
aren't too hard to get—it's meant to  
be fun, after all.

# X-RATED

VAN HELSING

# VAN HELSING

PUBLISHER: Vivendi/Universal // DEVELOPER: Saffire // PLAYERS: 1 // LIVE: No // MSRP: \$49.99 // ESRB: T

Be vewy, vewy quiet. Van Helsing's hunting monstars.

The touching story of a troubled monster hunter and his most favored hat. *Van Helsing* reminds us all there's nothing in this world a good shotgunning can't cure.

Van Helsing vaporizes Mr. Hyde. The Hunchback? That deformed bastard gets it right in the face. Frankenstein's monster? Try



"Do I have to kill you all over again? Didn't I kill you right the first time?"

Frankenstein's lumbering bullet receptacle. No target is too unholly.

As breathless third-person adventure, *Van Helsing* soars, providing wave after wave of monsters. Players must not only survive the beasts' dedicated onslaughts, but also find and use the right weapon for the right enemy. The game's tight pacing and easily marked paths ensure little aimless wandering; nearly every room and corridor serves as a battleground pitting *Van Helsing* against the creatures of the night.

As a game, *Van Helsing* suffers from some very real problems. Environments are often so big *Van Helsing* and an antagonist do not appear onscreen together. This

means, say, when battling Frankenstein's monster, the hero will often be injured by stomping-foot shockwave attacks he didn't see coming. Other times, *Van Helsing* will be shooting at an offscreen foe, whittling away its health while the monster can't—or won't—fight back. Worse, the game stretches out *Van Helsing's* quest to kill Dracula by recycling its boss monsters one after another. Fighting the Hunchback once is fine enough, thank you very much. //

Greg Orlando

**XBN 06**  
OUT OF TEN

## Hat Trick

► *Van Helsing* truly loves his hat. Enemies can knock it off his head, and a few of the smarter foes will pick it up and wear it. Hilarity ensues when our hero must blast away at a dimwitted troll in an attempt to recover his cherished topper. Also, the game actually tracks whether *Van Helsing* finishes a stage with his hat on, prompting *Xbox Nation* to wonder, is this the ultimate gameplay innovation? And the answer is, of course, a resounding yes.



FRANKENSTEIN

**XRATED**

CASTLE OF SHIKIGAMI // WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY

# CASTLE OF SHIKIGAMI

PUBLISHER: Kids Station // DEVELOPER: Alfa System // PLAYERS: 1-2 // LIVE: No

**Alfa Systems crafts a shooter for the 2D connoisseurs**

 **Shikigami no Shiro (Castle of Shikigami)** is an enthralling fortress of a game. It is filled with legions of ruthless foes unleashed by fearsome screen-filling bosses. Thank goodness, then, that the playable characters in this most traditional of 2D shoot-em-ups (or "shmups") are armed to the teeth.

Consensus: 2D shmups have had their day. But don't scoff. *Shikigami* is fresh, even if its genre is only slightly less antiquated than bat-and-ball Pong variants. The game is played out on a 2D plane, but the world of *Shikigami* is depicted in full polygonal glory. Only the characters and bullets that fly over that 3D terrain look flat. Overall, the visual effect is that of a pop-up book being speed-read.

*Shikigami* is one of a raft of recent shmups (see also: *Ikaruga*, *Border Down*, and *Payvarian 2*) daring to challenge convention. Here the innovation is bold and resoundingly successful: The nearer a protagonist is to his target, the greater the effect of his arsenal. This has a tremendous impact on gameplay tactics. Daredevil stunts are encouraged when usually they are simply not necessary.

As electronic entertainment, *Shikigami* is hardly an epic. There are five playable characters and only half a dozen areas to play through. Veteran game players will see all it has to offer in a few hours, even if continuities aren't abused. But that's not the point. The point is this: *Shikigami* is amazingly good fun, and high scores are bettered only by increasingly erratic and courageous play. And that is what will keep the shmup connoisseurs returning. // **Jonti Davies**

**XBN 07**  
OUT OF TEN

# WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY

PUBLISHER: Acclaim // DEVELOPER: Swordfish // PLAYERS: 2-4 // LIVE: No

**The European Union plays ball...oddly**

 **World Championship Rugby** is a strange, strange game. In Rugby, England, just prior to the turn of the 20th century, one school decided that association football (meaning soccer) simply wasn't good enough for its pupils. So rugby was born. It's a weird crossbreed that dictates the ball be oddly shaped; that it be picked up and thrown about, and—just to make things even more interesting—that only backward passes be made.



Someone dropped a quarter.

Welcome to *World Championship Rugby*—a fine simulation of an utterly stupid pastime. And yes, it really is fine. Real stadiums are depicted in intricate detail. Twickenham, the London home of world champions England, is particularly impressive, and player animations are smooth and lifelike. Even the movement of the football is accurately odd. The physics, then, are all in place. But is it fun for an audience that may not have been exposed to rugby?



Considering the bizarre nature of the sport upon which Acclaim's game is based, Rugby is surprisingly coherent. Everything flows nicely, and smooth passages of play can be effected, often resulting in a try (a try is the rugby equivalent of a touchdown in American football), which is hugely satisfying simply because of the amount of effort that is required to score one. (Remember, players must go backward to go forward.)

It's unlikely that *Rugby* will ever be released outside of Europe. And, to be honest, that's no tragedy. All that will be missed elsewhere is a decent, enjoyable simulation of an obscure sport. // **Jonti Davies**

**XBN 06**  
OUT OF TEN

XRATED

DIVINATION NATION

# DIVINATION NATION

By John Newlin and  
Tricia Hollenberg



*Xbox Nation* asked a bona fide soothsayer to read the signs, interpret the stars, and review some of the hottest Xbox games yet to be released. Welcome to Divination Nation.



**Will *Fable* really be the greatest RPG of all time? Will *Halo 2* match the impossibly high standard set by its predecessor? Tired of waiting for these and other titles, *Xbox Nation* cut to a chase and contacted a real, certified psychic, Tricia Hollenberg from San Francisco—a vessel to the stars, channeler of the cosmos, reader of the chicken entrails—for unfiltered, unbiased predictions for the Xbox games...of the future!**

### Halo 2

Bungie/Microsoft

↳ **Synopsis:** Master Chief, the genetically enhanced super-badass and rampaging Covenant marauder, is back—with a renewed taste for alien blood. Will he stop the space invaders from

destroying Earth, thus paving the way for *Halo 3*?

**Psychic Prediction:** Overall, this one looks really good. There seem to be some legal issues surrounding it, though. It'll do well, but not as well as the first. I don't think the ending is very solid. It'll be left open to a third installment but won't live up to players' expectations.

*Halo* will be better than *Doom 3*, though. I see a lot of partnerships in the cards. There's something to do with pairs. Perhaps the Covenant will ally itself with someone or something else. Also, there will be an alliance broken. You need to have played the original game in order to really enjoy this one. They've built in something for those who have played the original.

There's something hopeful in this game. And there's a third in the works, but no one knows this yet. You'll enjoy it, but it's not great for any relationships you're in. Players have become more critical of the game since the first one. You might find that you've changed how you deal with things.

**Psychic's predicted score:** 7/10

### Fable

Big Blue Box/Microsoft

↳ **Synopsis:** In Lionhead's, highly-anticipated *Fable*, just as in that special place some humanoids refer to as "real life," your every action impacts how your customized character develops. Grow strong from battle, fat from overeating, tan from sunbathing, and marry your future wife (or husband) in this "groundbreaking" role-playing adventure. Just don't forget to take out the trash.

**Psychic Prediction:** This is going to be a sensible game, so it won't be terribly popular. There are karmic aspects to it, which is interesting.

It'll be a quite satisfying game that appeals to a wider range of people. This one feels like it'll be popular in other countries, Japan and Europe, in particular. It allows for creativity but is probably too hard to operate—a bit cumbersome.

It needs more refinement. It's harder to work than it needs to be. It's a process-oriented game—players either can't get to the end or get to it too quickly.

**Psychic's predicted score:** 6/10



↳ Sure, psychic Tricia Hollenberg can tell you when your Venus is aligned with your Saturn, but how accurate are her predictions? To test her skill, she was asked to predict the future for the martial arts epic *Ninja Gaiden*.

### Ninja Gaiden

Tecmo/Tecmo

**What *Xbox Nation* Said:** If *Ninja Gaiden* isn't the "perfect" action game, it's pretty damn close.

**Psychic Prediction:** This one seems to me that it would appeal to the younger set and a larger group as a whole. The good over evil in this instance might be more acceptable to a larger audience. Feels like a big financial risk for Tecmo, though. Someone's put up some big money for this. There's a very clever element to it. There's less plain killing and more thoughtful killing, as well as some trickiness to the game. This game is done and, overall, looks pretty good. Maybe someone who made it could die. There's a lot of loss around it. There's some sort of merger around this game. Are two companies getting together to do it? Or perhaps just pooling their resources. Expect some complications; legal or with the company. Perhaps with copyright control.

**Psychic's score:** 7/10

**Xbox Nation's rating:** 9



DOOM 3



B.C.

**B.C.**  
Intrepid/Microsoft

↳ **Synopsis:** Kill the hell out of some dinosaurs, why don't you? And try to build a civilization with some rocks and sticks while you're at it there, Chumley.

**Psychic Prediction:** I don't think this one will go over very well. Parents won't be buying it, so it won't be appealing to kids, and it's not sophisticated, so the older set won't be into it, either. That's basically what I see too politically incorrect for kids and not smart enough for adults. Next...

**Psychic's predicted score:** 3/10



SILENT HILL 4

↳ **Synopsis:** A gamer goth classic in its own right, the creptastic third-person adventure Silent Hill attempts to terrorize the mind through psychological horror. Skinless children? Check. Zombie nurses? Check. Twisted story line? Check. Happy ending? Check.

**Psychic Prediction:** Sounds too fabulous to be true. It doesn't look bad. It has a cult following, for sure—like the people who watch *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. But this doesn't make it a particularly good game. There will be a lot written about it. People will be discussing it, perhaps even college teachers. This one kind of stands alone like an original because it's got its own genre.



FABLE

I don't think I'll like it, but it seems to be working. Is it possible that this one has softened from previous versions because they believe their own hype? They could blow it. They might have different people working on it, and the new people are very creative and clever but might miss the point of the game.

**Psychic's predicted score:** 6/10

**Doom 3**  
Vicarious Visions/Activision

↳ **Synopsis:** You're on Mars. Demon aliens have taken over the space station. Kill them all, in the dark, with lots of guns.

**Psychic Prediction:** This is interesting. Let me see. I expected to find more to do with money and

the game to be a big moneymaker. This one is really weird. They may put some tricks in the game to make it more complex and compensate for its...I don't know. There might be some hidden levels or more than one way to get through this game. It seems like there might be a few optional ways to finish it. The review of the game, by the people...it's not going to play out as well as people expected. Maybe there was too much expectation. I predict it will be good but not fabulous. If they've built in some twists, that's good. I don't know if technology has advanced enough. I think maybe the sales will be disappointing.

**Psychic's predicted score:** 5/10

**Silent Hill 4**  
Konami/Konami

## FILE UNDER L:

**BRUCE LEE: QUEST OF THE DRAGON**

PUBLISHER: Universal Interactive

DEVELOPER: Rubin

PLAYERS: 1

LIVE: No

MSRP: \$14.99

ESRB: T

Exit the dragon, right into the toilet

## ↳ What we said then:

"After a spirited round of the dung-pile-disguised-as-a-DVD *Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon*, one supposes the executors of Lee's estate have embarked on a quest of their own—to find a more spacious coffin than Lee's corpse may properly roll over in."

"Martial arts master Bruce Lee deserves better than the bug-ridden *Bruce Lee: Quest of the Dragon*. In truth, it can be said that Adolf Hitler and Vlad the Impaler also deserve better than *Dragon*."

**What we say now:** This is a fighting game in 3D, but only up to the point where the 3D becomes an obnoxious detriment to the gameplay. Although it occasionally looks like you can travel off the main path, you'll find that evil magicians have constructed invisible walls to confine you. Players might recognize these invisible walls from other crappy 3D games, but in this rare case, they become part of the enemy's strategy. Your opponents will sometimes wander behind them and force Bruce Lee to use his secret "sit still and wait for a few minutes" technique. Fans will recognize this move from his film *Fists of Stupid Mystery*, in which he has to defeat a city full of ninjas without leaving his backyard.

The other fun thing about the 3D aspect of the game is that when a fight starts, you lock onto an enemy and lose your ability to move. You can

still sort of shuffle back and forth, but you're almost completely at the mercy of any friends the enemies might have. Luckily, most of them follow the ninja etiquette of politely waiting their turn while you beat their colleague to a bloody pulp. And while it's hard to tell in those masks, when one of them breaks tradition and sneaks Lee in the back of the head, he does seem genuinely sorry about the unfortunate *faux pas*.

Between fights, the game treats you to loading screens, most of which seem only to be loading a second loading screen. These are used for dramatic purposes before important fights—for instance, Lee may encounter a loading screen followed by a shot of the same ninja stating, "I killed 300 times walking down the stairs, followed by the ninja stating, 'You are dead.' Can you feel the intensity?"

Waaaaaaahhhh!  
Seems baby



Bruce Lee. He gave his life for Saturday afternoon Big Movie Kung Fu Theater.

**XTINCTION AGENDA**

Character assassination made easy

**NO. 4: AQUAMAN**

**Crimes against humanity:** Criminal misuse of a hook, second-degree wussiness  
**Appeared in:** *Aquaman: Battle for Atlantis*

It's tough being the Jerry Lewis of the underwater set and the Steve Urkel of superheroes. When it came time to dole out the cool hero gimmicks, Xbozo Aquaman was not only last in line, he was fast in line in the wrong line. Thus, he got stuck with the ability to breathe underwater and talk to fish. "So, you're a fish, boy?"

"Eep!"  
Somewhere along the line, Aquaman had his hand eaten by piranha, none of whom, apparently, thought much of the hero's conversation skills. A hook was then attached to Aquaman's arm, which dramatically improved the character. Now, Aquaman was only a wuss from the stamp up.

Anyways, Aquaman's greatest triumph was also his most shameful moment: *Aquaman: Battle for Atlantis*. This craptacular Xbox "adventure" featured the moribund hero rocketing not into glory but rather the bargain bin, and not even the fishes the game now sleeps with would want anything to do with it.



# XTRA

## OUT OF THE BOX

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### It's Diesel

It's time. Time to stop taking out your frustration on controller after controller. No more walks of shame into your local videogame retailer with a handful of mashed plastic bits and a lame story about your out-of-control younger brother. Maybe you've been battling the same pack of mindless henchmen for hours. Or maybe you're just tired of getting trounced by that little punk from down the street—how does he do that? Don't fret, XBN is coming to your aid. Don't let these games play you; get tricky with these tips.

## THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY



### MELEE COMBAT

**Block incoming punches and wait for the right opportunity to strike.**

→ In prison, fighting is an everyday occurrence. Stick with jabs for the best results. They're not powerful, but they're quick, allowing you to block before your opponent retaliates. Utilize more damaging attacks, like uppercuts, once your opponent staggers backward. If your timing is right, you can counter an incoming punch by pressing L + R. This will cause Riddick to grab the attacker's arm and shove him backward. Countering allows you to temporarily stun an opponent, giving you a chance to strike. Your timing must be perfect; if you're picking up your teeth, avoid countering jabs and concentrate on slower and more telegraphed punches.

### DISARM

**Wait for your opponent to attack, then press L + R to turn their weapon against them.**

→ At times you'll be faced with assaulting a guard armed with

a firearm. You're at an obvious disadvantage, but if you can move into close range, you can even the odds. As soon as you move within a few feet, the guard will give up on shooting you and start smacking you with the firearm's butt. Each strike with the butt knocks you back, so keep pushing forward. If you're not careful, the guard will knock you back several feet and then open fire—don't let this happen. Instead, watch the guard's movements. As soon as the guard attacks, press L + R. If your timing is just right, Riddick will grab the guard's weapon and turn it against him. The same maneuver can work against enemies armed with melee weapons.



### MORE FIGHTING TIPS

**1** No new punches or attacks are available when you're wearing the brass knuckles. Since Riddick wears the brass knuckles on his right hand, you'll have to stick with right-handed attacks to benefit from the weapon's attack bonus.

**2** If you're jumped by more than one inmate, back up through an open doorway. This will keep your enemies in front of you and prevent flanking attacks. The funneling effect allows you take on one opponent at a time.

**3** Try flanking maneuvers of your own by moving laterally and striking your opponent from the side or rear. This is easiest after your opponent has thrown an uppercut or elbow strike—attacks that require long windups and recoveries. Use the opportunity to unleash a series of quick jabs.

**4** Reserve the club for surprise-attack situations when you can whack your opponent in the back of the head. When facing an enemy brandishing a club, stick and move to strike your opponent, then quickly backpedal before he can swing. Unless you have a club of your own, don't try to block an incoming strike. Instead, step out of the way and stay alive.

**5** The quickest way to down an opponent with the shiv is to intercept his incoming strike by simultaneously pressing L + R. Riddick will grab the attacker's arm and drive the shiv into his neck.

## PRIMA STRATEGY GUIDES

From the makers of the Mafia, Secret Weapons Over Normandy, and Hitman, Contracts strategy guides comes the guide for *The Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay*. Quite a spread from the wide-eyed coffee freaks from Prima Games. Pick yourself up a strategy guide or two.

## SIDE QUESTS



### A FAVOR FOR WAMAN (PRISON AREA)

Completing Waman's quest is the key to getting a weapon prior to your fights with the Aquilas.

If you want another pack of smokes and some brass knuckles, go to Cell A 37. Completing this task for Waman is not necessary, but getting your hands on the brass knuckles will make your fight with Rust and his gang much easier. Cell A 37 is home to Grish and Waman. Talk to Waman and offer to help him. Waman wants you to take down Molina, located across the hall in cell A 38. Enter Molina's cell and whale away on him until he stumps to the ground. He drops a set of brass knuckles. These will come in handy for your fight against the Aquilas. With Molina out of the picture, return to Waman to get your pack of smokes.

This to poison Binks' food. Enter the feed ward and turn left to spot Sawtooth sitting at a table. Across from Sawtooth is Binks' food tray. Approach it and press X to plant the poison in his food. Stand back and watch Binks eat his food. He takes a few bites, then staggers away from the table before collapsing on the floor. Return to section C of the courtyard and speak with Nurse to get your reward for poisoning Binks. Nurse gives you a pack of smokes for your trouble.



### GET DRUGS/GULAG'S RED TUBE (DOUBLE MAX)

Follow Asif into the feed ward and retrieve Twotongue's injector and Gulag's red tube in the recess behind this loose panel.

If you don't want to continue fighting, go see Cricket in section A of the courtyard and buy a shiv from him for 30 UDs. This is the first step to acquire drugs. Cricket will give Asif the money to stash in their secret hiding place. Follow Asif to the feed ward and watch him stash the money behind the loose panel. When Asif leaves, open the panel and retrieve your 30 UDs as well as Gulag's red tube and Twotongue's injector. Now you can return to Twotongue. Along the way, stop and give Gulag his red tube. Hell reward you with a pack of smokes.

Twotongue is glad to see his injector and gives you a pack of smokes for your effort. But he won't trade until you bring him a moth. Moths can be seen flying around the courtyard. Wait until one is within reach and press the X button to grab it. Take the moth back to Twotongue and he'll finally agree to trade. He sells g-smack for 10 UDS, poison for 10 UDS, and a special pack of smokes for 10 UDS and 10 moths. Getting caught with the g-smack will ensure an appointment with Abbott.

With the drugs in your possession, go to section A of the courtyard and approach the two guards. As the guards frisk you, they'll find the drugs and take you to see Abbott in the

interrogation room. However, they won't find any weapons you may have on you, allowing you to use them in your fight against Abbott.



### KILL ALL BLUESKINS

#### (DOUBLE MAX/UPPER MINES)

Take out Moseley, Void, and Alonso in the upper mines to complete this quest.

In the courtyard, stop in section B and speak with Jamal-Udeen. He wants you to kill the Blueskins if you want another pack of smokes, take the job. Assuming you've already taken out Herman and Motox, you have three more Blueskins (Moseley, Void, and Alonso) to kill to complete Jamal-Udeen's sub-mission. They're all located in the upper mines next to the door leading to the cargo transport. You can take out Moseley on your way down to the mines. But you'll have to eliminate Void and Alonso on your way back after speaking with Jagger Valance in the mines. Take this job if you're planning to complete the switch list side quest—Void has half of the list

locations. The first half is behind a loose panel in the work-pass area. Enter the keypad-locked room and search the wall on the right for this panel. You must retrieve the second half from Void (a Blueskin) in the upper mines. You can collect your reward (a pack of smokes) from Cuellas after you return from the mines.



### GET WILKINS INFO ON JAGGER VALANCE

#### (DOUBLE MAX/HMING CORE)

Remember to speak with Wilkins after returning from the mines.

Wilkins wants information on Jagger Valance in the mines. Because you're heading that way, offer your help. You can complete this side quest by simply talking with Jagger Valance in the mining core—something you have to do anyway. While on your way to tower 19, be sure to stop by the courtyard and speak with Wilkins. He's glad to hear Jagger Valance is still alive and gives you some UD money for your effort.

### SHURIK'S GLASSES

#### (WORK PASS/UPPER MINES)

Shurik's glasses are located on a crate in the upper mines.

Upon entering the work-pass area, turn left and look for an inmate named Shurik exiting the mines. He left his glasses in the upper mines. Offer to help him out. In the upper mines, make your way to the large rift door where Quintana operates a drill while being watched by a guard. Drop down into stealth mode and sneak up behind the guard to snap his neck. With the guard out of the way, approach Quintana and speak with him. He's glad you took out the guard and tells you that Shurik's glasses are nearby. Turn around to spot a stack of crates along the right side of the large door. Climb up on the first crate and turn toward the next, stack to spot Shurik's glasses. You can return Shurik's glasses upon exiting the mine, on your way to tower 19. //

### POISON BINKS

#### (DOUBLE MAX)

Place the poison in Binks' food to complete this side quest.

Nurse is a loan shark looking to collect a debt from Binks in the feed ward. He wants you to poison Binks' food! Go to the feed ward. Motor (a Blueskin) blocks your path into the feed ward. He's looking for payback because you took out Herman. Back up into the darkened corridor to fight Motor. If the security turrets in the feed ward see you fighting, they'll fire on both of you. Motor isn't that tough. Block his punches and pummel him with a series of quick jabs. When Motor falls, he drops a bottle of poison. You can use



### SNITCH LIST

#### (DOUBLE MAX/WORK PASS/UPPER MINES)

The first half of the snitch list is located behind this loose panel in the work-pass area.

Look for a large group of Surenos standing outside the feed ward. Find their leader, Cuellas, and speak with him to get this side quest. Cuellas wants you to find a snitch list. It was stolen from the Surenos. The snitch list is found in two pieces in two separate



# CODE-X

Someone once said, "Ye shalt not cheat," but we shot him with our unlimited ammo and pretended not to hear

→ It's time to pull out those games that may have slipped from the heavy rotation—these codes here are going to breathe the new life into what you thought was a conquered beast. Become a monster in Mafia, tackle Springfield in The Simpsons: Hit & Run, and unlock another fighter in Secret Weapons Over Normandy (it's TIE-grid). Not to mention a load of goodies for the new stuff out there: NBA Ballers, Fight Night, and more will make your nights long and days at work longer. Codes are good, codes are real good...



## FIGHT NIGHT

Smashing baby, yeah!  
Take to the ring as a Mini-Me wannabe and challenge all comers with this cool cheat. We've thrown in an all-venues cheat, too.

### MINIATURE FIGHTERS

Main menu: Highlight Play Now and press Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Left, A.



### ALL VENUES

Main menu: Highlight My Career and press Left, Left, Left, Right, Right, Right, Left, Right, Right.



### BIG TIGGER

Record Book menu: Go to Most Wins and press Up twice.

## MAFIA

Gotta keep a low profile with a life of crime? Hell no. Roll like the man in this big-ass monster truck. Say hello to my little friend, mang.



### MONSTER TRUCK

Take first place in all of the races in racing championship mode.

### CAR SELECTION

Learn to break into cars during missions, which will allow you to use them in free ride.

### TIME OF DAY

Progress through story mode to unlock a day/night option for free ride.

### CITY SELECTION

Progress through story mode to unlock more areas for free ride.



## MANHUNT

You've got to prove yourself worthy for these cheats, but the payoff is great. Get a five-star rating and you'll see a posse of insane clowns.

These codes must be unlocked by getting a five-star rating with two consecutive scores on hardcore mode only.

### BIN BAG

Black, Down, B, Left,

### CAMHEADS

X, Black, R Trigger, R Trigger, Down

### CERBERUS VARIANT DESIGNS

R Trigger, R Trigger, X, L Trigger

### CLOWN HEAD VARIATIONS

Left, Right, Left, Right

### EARLY INNOCENT HOODIE DESIGNS

B, B, B, R Trigger

### HEADSHOTS

Up, Down, Right, Right

### HEADSHOTS 2

R Trigger, White, L Trigger, Black, L Trigger

### LEVEL ART

X, X, White, Down

### PIGGY

Y, X, B, Down

### PIGGY & CASH TOY MOCK-UPS

X, X, X, Down

### SCARECROW

R Trigger, L Trigger, White, L Trigger

### SCARECROW HALLOWEEN HEAD

Up, Up, Up, Up, Up

### HUNTING MEN

Imagine the shock and surprise at XBNHQ upon opening our copy of Manhunt, only to realize that it was, in fact, not a videogame translation of the 1992 film Manhunt, which starred Betty Midler as an out-of-work masseuse "looking for love in all the wrong places."

### VARIATION

Right, Left, Left, Left

### SMILEYS

Left, R Trigger, R Trigger, Y

### THE CLOWNS

White, White, L Trigger, White

### THE JURY

R Trigger, R Trigger, Y, B

### THE LOST

White, Right, B, White

### TRAMP

L Trigger, Y, Y, Y

### WARDOGS

R Trigger, White, L Trigger, Black

### WARDOGS ZOO SNIPER

Down, Up, Left, Up

### FULLY EQUIPPED (WEAPONS)

R Trigger, White, L Trigger, Black, Down, Up, Left, Up

### HELUM HUNTERS (ENEMIES HAVE HIGH-PITCHED VOICES)

R Trigger, R Trigger, Y, B, X, Black, L Trigger, Down

### INVISIBILITY

X, X, X, Down, X, Down, B, Up

### MONKEY SKIN

X, X, White, Down, Y, X, B, Down

### PIGGY SKIN

Up, Down, Left, Left, R Trigger, White, L Trigger, Y

### RABBIT SKIN

Left, R Trigger, R Trigger, Y, R Trigger, R Trigger, X, L Trigger

### REGENERATE (HEALTH REFILLS OVER TIME)

White, Right, B, White, Black, Down, B, Left

### RUNNER (INFINITE RUN METERS)

White, Right, L Trigger, White, Left, Right, B, Right, Left, Right

### SILENCE (ENEMIES CAN HEAR YOU)

R Trigger, R Trigger, White, L Trigger, Right, B, Left, Right, Left

### SUPER PUNCH (KILLER PUNCHES)

L Trigger, Y, Y, Y, B, B, R Trigger

### GOD MODE (CAN BE ENTERED AT THE MAIN MENU AFTER COMPLETING FETISH MODE)

Down, B, Up, X, Y, X, White, Up, Up, Left, Y

### MONKEY MINIGAME

Complete levels 11 through 15 with a three-star or better ranking.

**BALLER**

Hour. A thug that has "made it" to the big time. Originally referred to ball players that made it out of the streets to make millions as a pro ball player, but now is used to describe any thug that is "living large." ex. Pain is a part of the game when you're a baller. [urbandictionary.com](http://urbandictionary.com)

**XTRA**

NBA BALLERS

# NBA BALLERS

Enter these codes then press the directional pad in any direction at the Vs. screen:

**2X JUICE REPLENISH**

YYYYBBBXX

**ALLEY-OOP ABILITY**

YYYYYYBBXXXXXX

**ALTERNATE GEAR**

YBBXXX

**BABY BALLERS**

YYYYBBXXX

**BACK-IN ABILITY**

YBBXXX

**BETTER FREE THROWS**

YTYBBXXXXXX

**BIG HEAD**

YBBBXXXX

**EXPANDED MOVE SET**

YYYYBBXX

**FIRE ABILITY**

YYYYYYYYBBXX

**GREAT HANDLES**

YYYYBBXX

**HALF HOUSE**

YYYYBBBBBXXXXXX

**HOTSPOT ABILITY**

YYYYYYBBXXXXXX

**KID BALLERS**

YYYYYBBXXX

**LEGAL GOAL TENDING**

YYYYYYYYBBBBXXXXXX

**NO WEATHER**

YBBXX

**PLAY AS BIENEZMAN-A**

YYYYBBXXXXXX

**PLAY AS BIENEZMAN-B**

YYYYYYBBXXXXXX

**PLAY AS COACH**

YYYYYYBBBXXXXXX

**PLAY AS SECRETARY**

YYYYYYBBXXXXXX

**PUT BACK ABILITY**

YYYYBBXX

**PYTHON**

YYYYBBXXXXXX

**R2R MODE**

XXXXXXXX

**RAIN**

YBBXXX

**RANDOM MOVES**

YYY

**SHOW SHOT PERCENTAGE**

BX..

**SNOW**

YYYYBBXX

**SPEEDY PLAYERS**

YYBXXX

**STUNT ABILITY**

YYBBBXXXXXX

**SUPER BACK-INS**

YYBBXXXXXX

**SUPER BLOCK ABILITY**

YBBXXXXX

**SUPER PUSH**

YYBXXXXX

**SUPER STEALS**

YYBXXXXX

**TOURNAMENT MODE**

BX..

**UNLIMITED JUICE**

YYYYYYBBBXXXXX

**YOUNG BALLERS**

YYYYBBBXXXXX

Enter these codes at the Phrase-clues screen to get the unlockable (Note: You must have the player unlocked for the alternate outfit to work):

**ALLEN IVERSON'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

KILLER CROSSOVER

**ALLEN IVERSON'S RECORDING STUDIO**

THE ANSWER

**ALONZO MOURNING'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

ZO

**AMARE STOUDEMIRE'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

RISING SUN

**BARON DAVIS' ALTERNATE GEAR**

STYLIN' &amp; PROFLIN

**BILL RUSSELL'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

CELTICS DYNASTY

**CHRIS WEBBER'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

24 SECONDS

**CLYDE DREXLER'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

CLYDE THE GLIDE

**DOMINIQUE WILKINS' ALTERNATE GEAR**

DUNK FEST

**GEORGE GERVIN'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

THE ICEMAN COMETH

**JALEN ROSE'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

BRING IT!

**JASON TERRY'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

BALL ABOVE ALL

**JASON WILLIAMS' ALTERNATE GEAR**

GIVE AND GO

**JOHN STOCKTON'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

COURT VISION

**JULIUS IRVING'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

ONE ON ONE

Grab the bling quicker and easier with these cheats. Not only can you unlock mad gear, you can also drunk on your boys with a big head. Foshizzle.

**KARL MALONE'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

SPECIAL DELIVERY

**KEVIN GARNETT'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

BOSS HOGS

**KEVIN MCNAMEE'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

HOLLA BACK

**KOBE BRYANT'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

JAPANESE STEAK

**KOBE BRYANT'S ITALIAN HOME**

EURO CRIB

**LARRY BIRD'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

HOOSIER

**LATRELL SPREWELL'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

SPREE

**LEBRON JAMES' ALTERNATE GEAR**

KING JAMES

**MAGIC JOHNSON'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

LAKEER LEGENDS

**MANU GINOBILI'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

MANU

**NATE "TINY" ARCHIBALD'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

NATE THE SKATE

**NEENE'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

RAGS TO RICHES

**OSCAR ROBERTSON'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

ANT NO THING

**PISTOL PETE'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

PISTOL PETE

**RASHARD LEWIS'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

FAST FORWARD

**RASHEED WALLACE'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

BRING DOWN THE HOUSE

**RAY ALLEN'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

ALL STAR

**REGGIE MILLER'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

FROM DOWNTOWN

**RICHARD HAMILTON'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

RIP

**SHAQUILLE O'NEAL'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

DIESEL RULES THE PAINT

**SPECIAL MOVIE #1 JUICE HOUSE****SPECIAL SHOE #1 DUB DEUCE****SPECIAL SHOE #2 COLD STREAM****STEPHON MARBURY'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

PLATINUM PLATA

**STEVE FRANCIS' ALTERNATE GEAR**

ANKLE BREAKER

**STEVE FRANCIS' ALTERNATE GEAR**

RISING STAR

**STEVE NASH'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

HAR CANADA

**TONY PARKER'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

RUN AND SHOOT

**UNLOCK ALL PLAYERS AND ALTERNATE GEAR**

NBA BALLERS TRUE PLAYA

**WES UNSOLEO'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

OLD SCHOOL

**WILLIS REED'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

HALL OF FAME

**WILT CHAMBERLAIN'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

WILT THE STU

**YAO MING'S ALTERNATE GEAR**

CENTER OF ATTENTION

**YAO MING'S CHILDHOOD GRADE SCHOOL PREP SCHOOL****PAPER BALLERS**

YYYYBBBXXXXX

**PASS 2 FRIEND ABILITY**

YYYYBBBXXXXXX

**PERFECT FREE THROWS**

YYYYBBBXXXXXX

**PLAY AS AFRO MAN**

YYYYBBBXXXXXX

**PLAY AS AGENT**

## THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

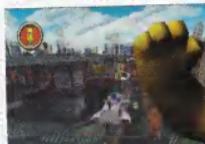
→ All this Simpson foolin' around really puts us at ease. Expand your tour of Springfield with explosive accidents and high-flying antics. Pause the game and enter the Option menu, then hold the Left and Right triggers and enter the code:



### ONE-HIT KILLS

(All cars will explode if you ram them or if they ram you, including cops and bosses)

YYYY



### PRESS YOUR HORN FOR HIGH-FLYING JUMPS

XXXY

### SECRET CARS REPLACED BY RED BOX RACER

BBYX



### SHOW GRID VIEW

BABY

### SHOW SPEEDOMETER

YYBX

### SUPERFAST CARS

XXXX

### ALL CARS FOR NEW GAME

(Must be typed in with complete save loaded)

ABAB

### YOUR CAR IS INVINCIBLE

YAYA

### YOUR CARS ARE FIVE TIMES FASTER THAN NORMAL

YYYY



## Prima: now more than ever

Prima games is our helpful partner in bringing you this section because, frankly, we've got better things to do than sit around all day testing codes. They don't do the Stuff bit, the Essential Selection things, or the on-going little bits that run along the tops of the pages. But they do a fine job of providing you with first-class tips and tricks for the games you're playing as we speak. Thanks, Primal!

## HITMAN: CONTRACTS



→ Agent 47 has little patience for you. Use this to sneak to any level and make the hit like a pro would.

### LEVEL SELECT

At the Main menu, press X, Y, B, Left, Up, Right, Left trigger, Right trigger.

## TOP SPIN

→ To think that tennis could be a gentleman's game (tell that to Serend), Taunt your opponent even more with this secret.

### MORE RANDOM VARIETIES OF TAUNTS

Press the Left analog stick Up, Down, Left, or Right, and press Black or White.





### SPRINGFIELD WILL NO LONGER BE "AMERICA'S SORROW"

Of all the minutiae hidden in Vivendi Universal's cool *Crazy Taxi* rip-off *The Simpsons: Hit & Run*—the Springfield tire fire, the tomato fields, the Plow King truck—none is more obscure than Larry the Looter, a semiplayable videogame hidden in the Kwik-E-Mart.

# MLB SLUGFEST: LOADED

Get some direction, young gamer! Don't just bang away at the loading screen—here are some cool cheats will make that arcade-style ball even more fun:

Enter these codes during gametime.

#### BIG HEAD

Press X, X, Right.

#### MAX BATTING

Press X, X, Left.

#### MAX POWER

Press X, Y, Y, Left.

#### MAX SPEED

Press B, B, Left.

#### TINY HEAD

Press X, X, Left.

#### UNLIMITED TURBO

Press X, X, X, X, Y, Y, Y, B, B, B, B, Down.

Enter these codes at the Vs. screen.

#### 16-INCH SOFTBALL

2, 4, 2, Down

#### RUBBER BALL

2, 4, 2, Up

#### BIG HEAD

2, 0, 0, Right



#### BLADE BAT

0, 0, 2, Up

#### BONE BAT

0, 0, 1, Up

#### ICE BAT

0, 0, 3, Up

#### LOG BAT

0, 0, 4, Up

#### SPIKE BAT

0, 0, 5, Up

#### WHIFFLE BAT

0, 0, 4, Right

#### ATLANTIS STADIUM

3, 2, 1, Left

#### COLISEUM STADIUM

3, 3, 3, Up

#### EMPIRE PARK STADIUM

3, 2, 1, Right



#### FORBIDDEN CITY STADIUM

3, 3, 3, Left

#### MIDWAY PARK STADIUM

3, 2, 1, Down

#### MONUMENT STADIUM

3, 3, 3, Down

#### ROCKET PARK STADIUM

3, 2, 1, Up

#### ALIEN TEAM

2, 3, 1, Down

#### BOBBLEHEAD TEAM

1, 3, 3, Down

#### CASEY TEAM

2, 3, 3, Down

#### DOLPHIN TEAM

1, 0, 2, Down

#### OWARF TEAM

1, 0, 3, Down

#### EAGLE TEAM

2, 1, 2, Right

#### EVIL CLOWN TEAM

2, 1, 1, Down

#### GLADIATOR TEAM

3, 1, 3, Down

#### HORSE TEAM

2, 1, 1, Right

#### LION TEAM

2, 2, 0, Right

#### LITTLE LEAGUE

3, 1, 0, Down

#### MINOTAUR TEAM

1, 1, 0, Down

#### NAPALITANO TEAM

2, 3, 2, Down

#### OLSHAN TEAM

2, 2, 2, Down

#### PINTO TEAM

2, 1, 0, Right

#### RIVERA TEAM

2, 2, 2, Up

#### RODEO CLOWN

1, 3, 2, Down

#### SCORPION TEAM

1, 1, 2, Down

#### TEAM TERRY FITZGERALD

3, 3, 3, Right

#### [MUSO]

#### TEAM TODD McFARLANE

2, 2, 2, Right

## TOP 5 COSTUMES

Games have made it quite a tradition to bust the chops of PTAs and congressional committees and outfit their personalities in pretty skimpy gear, but our No. 1 here takes the cake: Wood elves and bikini-clad volleyballers, how down-there's a new girl in town. Follow that up with a sword-wielding bear (don't hit him, he's endangered) and Metal Gear turned Mil, and you can have some good times moving through these games with a different look. Next we have a samurai with soul, barely donning his robe, and Ryu in his classic Gaiden garb. These are the top five:

game on the hard setting.



### 3. METAL GEAR SOLID SUBSTANCE

The tuxedo: Play as Piskin and complete the VR missions with 100 percent.



### 4. SOUL CALIBUR 2

Mitsurugi's third costume: in weapon master mode, just purchase the little gem so Mitsurugi can fight while being laid-back.



### 5. NINJA GAIDEN

Ryu's training outfit: While you might like the new ninja outfit, why not keep Ryu's training outfit to keep it similar to the original Gaiden games?

#### 1. BMX XXX

The naughty girl outfit.

Unlock this little dirty

costume by getting first

place in both competition

areas.

#### 2. GENMA ONIMUSH

The panda suit:

To don this little cuddly

suit, just complete the

**XTRA**

MLB SLUGFEST: LOADED // TOP 5 COSTUMES

**XBN WANTS YOUR CODES!** That's right—we want you to send in your coolest tips, cheats, and secrets. The best ones will be printed in the pages of XBN, and if we don't get many, then some of the worst ones, too! E-mail them to us at [XBN@ziffdavis.com](mailto:XBN@ziffdavis.com).

# STUFF

Need versus want, you decide

**1. STREET FIGHTER 15TH ANNIVERSARY ACTION FIGURES**

\$13; [www.sotatoys.com](http://www.sotatoys.com)

Capcom is releasing the 15th anniversary Street Fighter action figures, and they're coming to a retailer near you. Distributed by SOTA Toys, five models will initially be introduced based on the warriors Ryu, Chun Li, Bison, Sagat, and Sodom. Each figure is 5 inches tall and fully articulated. Look for them in June.

**2. PANASONIC D-SNAP DIGITAL CAMERA**

\$300; [www.panasonic.com](http://www.panasonic.com)

High praise goes to Panasonic for its sleek-designed D-Snap digital camera. This 2-megapixel still camera is not only super slim, but also records in QuickTime Motion JPEG and features a rotating lens for shooting at creative angles and taking photos of yourself with your friends, so you're never left out. Add to that the abilities to listen to MP3, WMA, or AAC music files, voice record, and play back video and still images on a 1.5-inch diagonal LCD screen, and what more could you want for \$300?

**3. SMART WRAP**

\$5; [www.sumajin.com](http://www.sumajin.com)

Winner of an ID magazine 2002 Design Distinction Award, the Smart Wrap handles whatever slack your headphone cord provides with the greatest of ease. Available in a variety of pretty colors, Smart Wrap provides effortless relief from the rampant disease known as "the tangle."

**4. SONY DSC-T1**

\$500; [www.sony.com](http://www.sony.com)

In its never-ending race to produce the smallest/lightest/fastest products on the market, Sony has scored big with the DSC-T1. Sporting a 5-megapixel sensor, Carl Zeiss optics, and a hugely impressive 640x480 movie mode, this is the most portable, solidly constructed 5-megapixel camera on the market...for the moment.



# ESSENTIAL SELECTION

Xbox Nation picks the 50 best Xbox games to date

## Halo



Dev: Bungie Pub: Microsoft

**We like:** Launch titles that rule, as well as season two of Red vs. Blue.

**We don't like:** Waiting around for a sequel.

10 OUT OF TEN

## Grand Theft Auto Double Pack



Dev: Rockstar Vienna Pub: Rockstar Games

**We like:** Two-for-one deals. Fingers on our hands. Straight thuggin'.

**We don't like:** Public outcry about declining morals in videogames.

10

## Soul Calibur II



Dev: Namco Pub: Microsoft

**We like:** Finally getting our hands on a good, playable Spawn. Virtually, that is.

**We don't like:** Having to unlock Seung Min and Sophitia.

9 OUT OF TEN

## Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic



Dev: BioWare Pub: LucasArts

**We like:** Choices that affect your appearance, possible Jediom.

**We don't like:** Occasional graphical glitches, but they're pretty minor.

9 OUT OF TEN

## Chronicles of Riddick: Escape from Butcher Bay



Dev: Meteor Studios Pub: Vivendi Universal

**We like:** Astonishingly palatable voice acting, motion capture, and detail.

**We don't like:** Kung-fu style duds. Unless we're watching kung-fu movies.

9 OUT OF TEN

## Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne



Dev: Remedy Pub: Rockstar Games

**We like:** Bullet time and hard-boiled stuff. You know, like eggs and cops.

**We don't like:** How quickly it's all over—although preferable to the alternative.

9 OUT OF TEN

## Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time



Dev: Ubisoft Montreal Pub: Ubisoft

**We like:** Revisits that do justice to the originals.

**We don't like:** Being bum-rushed by demons you can't tell apart.

10

## Steel Battalion



Dev: Capstone Pub: Capcom

**We like:** Innovation and unapologetically huge controllers.

**We don't like:** Not reaching the eject button in time and having saves wiped.

10

## Ninja Gaiden



Dev: Tecmo Pub: Tecmo

**We like:** Reinvestigation of classic gameplay style with updated tech polish.

**We don't like:** Cameras which don't allow for adjustment during dicey moves.

9

## Breakdown



Dev: Namco Pub: Microsoft

**We like:** Flexing our long-unused Punch-Out! skills, this time in the proper setting.

**We don't like:** Amnesia as a plot device, no matter how effective it may be.

9

## Beyond Good & Evil



Dev: Ubisoft Pub: Ubisoft

**We like:** Charm, grace, Rastafarian rhinoceroses, and photojournalists.

**We don't like:** Insta-Boss® brand final bosses and letdowns at the end.

9

## Project Gotham Racing 2



Dev: Microsoft Game Studios Pub: Microsoft

**We like:** Seamless, sensible integration with Xbox Live, even in single player.

**We don't like:** Relentless A.I. opponents and strictly stock options for your ride.

9

# XTRA

## ESSENTIAL SELECTION

### The Sims: Bustin' Out

**Dev:** Maxis **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** A so-called life that's more exciting and fun than our real lives.

**We don't like:** Watching an incontinent little computer person have an "accident."

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### FIFA Soccer 2004

**Dev:** EA Redwood Shores **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Electronic Arts finally coming through with a quality soccer game.

**We don't like:** The whole MS/EA snitfest. Get it together, fellas.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Fight Night 2004

**Dev:** Electronic Arts **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Being electronically dissuaded from ever stepping into a ring ourselves.

**We don't like:** Having to wait this long for a boxing game that's not a masher.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Need for Speed Underground

**Dev:** Black Box **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Tweaking our rides out with endless options (Custom window tint? Sure. Electronic Bondo in action) and not having to worry about five-o.

**We don't like:** Quantum collisions, occasionally iffy framers, and an endless supply of money. Bet you never thought you'd hear that, huh?

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Top Spin

**Dev:** Power and Magic **Publ:** Microsoft

**We like:** Tennis games that are really RPGs in drag. Shhh! Don't tell.

**We don't like:** Reading about tennis. Unless D.F. Wallace is doing the writing.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### MVP Baseball 2004

**Dev:** Electronic Arts **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Venting our frustrations on scrubs like the Tulsa Drillers.

**We don't like:** Having to unlock vintage outfits—what's up with that?

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3

**Dev:** Ubisoft Montreal **Publ:** Ubisoft

**We like:** Realism in tactical shooters. Actually, the convincing illusion of reality.

**We don't like:** Being cussed at by 1337 haxors two states away.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Metal Arms: Glitch in the System

**Dev:** Intergalactic Studios **Publ:** MicroU

**We like:** Unrepentant cuteness, as long as it's accompanied by good gameplay.

**We don't like:** No online support—not even a little.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### NBA Live 2004

**Dev:** Electronic Arts **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Developers who pay attention to little things. Like rubber bands.

**We don't like:** Not being able to take it out on the information superhighway.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Sega GT Online

**Dev:** Koei **Publ:** Sega

**We like:** That it's 20 bucks and sports sick online tricks.

**We don't like:** That it's sort of an updated version of last year's game.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Rallisport Challenge 2

**Dev:** Big Huge Games **Publ:** Big Huge Games

**We like:** Being out in nature, so long as it's in a car and contributing to erosion.

**We don't like:** That there never seem to be any stereos in these things.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### Madden NFL 2004

**Dev:** Electronic Arts **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Owner mode, because we're fond of keeping a close eye on margins.

**We don't like:** Wondering if EA and Microsoft will ever kiss and make up.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

### The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King

**Dev:** Electronic Arts **Publ:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Cinematic and lavishly produced videogame excellence.

**We don't like:** Feeling like we're being talked down to.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

**Burnout 2: Point of Impact**

**Dev:** Criterion Games/**Pub:** Acclaim

**We like:** Driving on the wrong side of the road—with no offense to Europeans.

**We don't like:** Burning through burnout in a couple of days. And burns in general.

**9 OUT OF TEN**

**Panzer Dragoon Orta**

**Dev:** Nipkow Studios/**Pub:** Square

**We like:** Being on rails—when the rails rule this much. Prequel don't hurt, either.

**We don't like:** Confined spaces with willful cameras and tough enemies.

**9**

**Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance**

**Dev:** Konami/**Pub:** Konami

**We like:** As much Metal Gear as we can get our grubby little meat hooks on.

**We don't like:** Slowdown that has no earthly business in an Xbox game.

**9**

**SSX 3**

**Dev:** EA Black Box/**Pub:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Series that haven't started to suck. Quite the opposite, actually.

**We don't like:** Sounding like a broken record, but we'd really like SSX on Live.

**9**

**NBA 2K2**

**Dev:** Visual Concepts/**Pub:** Sega

**We like:** Better passing, tattoos where they ought to be, and better textures.

**We don't like:** Being dunked upon frequently and successfully.

**9**

**Armed and Dangerous**

**Dev:** Eidos/**Pub:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Blowing stuff up, which everyone knows is catharsis at its finest.

**We don't like:** That damn mountain path.

**8**

**Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon**

**Dev:** Revolution/**Pub:** The Adventure Company

**We like:** Any videogame with the Knights Templar in it.

**We don't like:** Poverty, chesty, obedience.

**8**

**NBA Street Vol. 2**

**Dev:** Electronics Arts/**Pub:** Electronic Arts

**We like:** Shammo-shams, heads or tails, cook jams, foie gras, and getting bent.

**We don't like:** Not being able to listen to ABBA or Morbid Angel while dunking.

**9**

**NBA Ballers**

**Dev:** Rhythm City/**Pub:** Microsoft

**We like:** 1-on-1 matches in exotic locations with our dunking avatars.

**We don't like:** 1-on-0, 0-on-1, or 0-on-0 offline mode.

**9**

**NASCAR Thunder 2004**

**Dev:** Big Ben Interactive/**Pub:** Big Ben Interactive

**We like:** Adaptive (comparatively) intelligent opponents who hold grudges.

**We don't like:** Very many other NASCAR games.

**9**

**World Series Baseball 2K3**

**Dev:** EA Mythos/**Pub:** EA

**We like:** Exhaustive research and attention to detail.

**We don't like:** A franchise mode that's detail-heavy to a fault.

**9**

**NFL 2K3**

**Dev:** Visual Concepts/**Pub:** Sega

**We like:** Talking smack to your buddies after a particularly punishing victory. Getting to see the week's highlights from games you may not have even played. Going without midgame saves or a playbook editor, and rushed point-and-clicking when under a two-minute deadline with no time-outs.

**8 OUT OF TEN**

**Deus Ex: Invisible War**

**Dev:** Ion Storm/**Pub:** Eidos

**We like:** Newtonian mechanics made flesh. And consequences. Sometimes.

**We don't like:** The idea of predestination.

**8**

**James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing**

Dev: Electronic Arts Pub: Electronic Arts

**We like:** Faithful Bond action with classic benniches and tight control.**We don't like:** Funky camera acrobatics and inventory-system antics.**8 OUT OF TEN****Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge**

Dev: PAX Studios Pub: Microsoft

**We like:** The backstory, complete with epic proportions and so on.**We don't like:** Being the equivalent of the mall-room guy in aerial combat.**8****Otogi: Myth of Demons**

Dev: Koei/Pixom Pub: Microsoft

**We like:** Cameras that behave themselves, weapon selection up the wazoo, demons who die just so, and bosses that are as spectacular as they are tough.**We don't like:** Working for Princess. No overtime, lousy pay, half-hour lunches. The hacking and slashing could get old if it weren't for the variety of demises.**8 OUT OF TEN****Amped 2**

Dev: Microsoft Pub: Microsoft

**We like:** Swank online-enabled snowboarding while hunting snowmen.**We don't like:** Rails and jumps that are still problematic and inconsistent.**8 OUT OF TEN****Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind—Game of the Year Edition**

Dev: Bethesda Softworks Pub: Bethesda Softworks

**We like:** More of what we liked the first time.**We don't like:** Small improvements, but at least it's priced accordingly.**8 OUT OF TEN****MotoGP 2**

Dev: Codemasters Pub: THQ

**TOCA Race Driver 2**

Dev: Codemasters Pub: Codemasters

**We like:** Racing, variety pack-style (without the inevitable box of Special K).**We don't like:** Being prevented from tweaking in career mode.**8 OUT OF FIFTEEN****TimeSplitters 2**

Dev: Free Radical Pub: Eidos

**We like:** Ten levels of diverse environments and improved graphics.**We don't like:** Being thrown into boss battles without warning, and opaque goals.**8 OUT OF TEN****Jet Set Radio Future**

Dev: ZeniMax Pub: Sony

**We like:** Ninety-degree grinds, revisited controls, and more leisure time for art.**We don't like:** Cops and spray paint in an electrically fenced-in environment.**8 OUT OF TEN****Phantasy Star Online: Episode I & II**

Dev: Sega Team Pub: Sega

**We like:** Sonic Team's charm, free keyboard adapters, and multiplayer RPG-ing.**We don't like:** Mandatory monthly fees in excess of what two burritos cost.**8 OUT OF TEN**

# HOOKUPS

Need a little something extra? Xbox Nation recommends...



**LOGITECH CORDLESS CONTROLLER**

PRICE: \$69.95  
[www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

Logitech proclaims, "The Logitech Cordless Controller for Xbox is the controller you've been waiting for," and it's right, if you're one who pines for comfortable and well-made peripherals.



**CONTROLLER S**

PRICE: \$29.95  
[www.xbox.com](http://www.xbox.com)

Behold gaming perfection in the Controller S. This Microsoft offering replaces the unwieldy brick originally packaged with the Xbox and is a must-have for anyone with an Xbox and hands to play it.



**MAD CATZ BLASTER**

PRICE: \$29.99  
[www.madcatz.com](http://www.madcatz.com)

When zombies come looking for sweet brain flesh, have the Blaster handy. It's got auto-fire capabilities, a built-in vibration function, and a rubber handgun. Note: This works only on videogame zombies, stupid.



**MAGIC BOX**

PRICE: \$24.90  
[www.ilk-sang.com](http://www.ilk-sang.com)

The Magic Box seemingly has been produced by grand wizards who envisioned a world where Xbox owners could play their games with Dreamcast, Saturn, or PlayStation 2 controllers.

## ...BE AFRAID. BE VERY AFRAID

Five games that you should not, under any circumstances, pay for



**STAR TREK: SHATTERED UNIVERSE**

DEV: STARSPIRE/PUB/TDK/INTERACTIVE  
→ We've formed a theory that this garbage was designed by clever bullies who wanted to continue tormenting dorks into adulthood with a game that would punish anyone nerdy enough to buy it. The controls are so unresponsive you'll suspect that someone replaced your nerdfighter with a space robot. If your laser eye does run into an enemy ship, it's usually not because of a button you pushed. And since no mission objectives are "Bob around clumsy for 30 minutes," trying to complete them is going to get frustrating.



**ANTZ EXTREME RACING**

DEV: EARTHTIME/THQ/INTERACTIVE  
→ From the makers of *Three's Company* Surfing in Your Face and Bob Hope's "Holy Crap!" Acid-Spitting Cobra Fighting comes an edgy racing game based on an animated Woody Allen movie. Awwww, yeahhhh!



**REIGN OF FIRE**

DEV: MIDWAY/PUB/HIGHWAY  
→ The evil dragons have scorched the world and turned it into a dark, ugly place. And it's the perfect winning strategy, since they've made it so dull, you'll have turned the Xbox off long before you've killed any of them.



**MIKE TYSON'S HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING**

DEV: ATOMIC PLANET/PUB/CODEMASTERS  
→ One would think that with all the people Mike Tyson has beaten unconscious, sexually assaulted, and partially eaten, Codemasters would have made him a better game, if only to keep him docile.



**FREAKY FLYERS**

DEV: MIDWAY/PUB/HIGHWAY  
→ If you're able to look past the wacky comical antics of the cartoon characters, you'll ask yourself why you put yourself through all that unfunny wackiness just to play this mediocre racing game.

**EX~~I~~T**

**COMING SOON** IN THE AUGUST ISSUE

# **PARIAH**

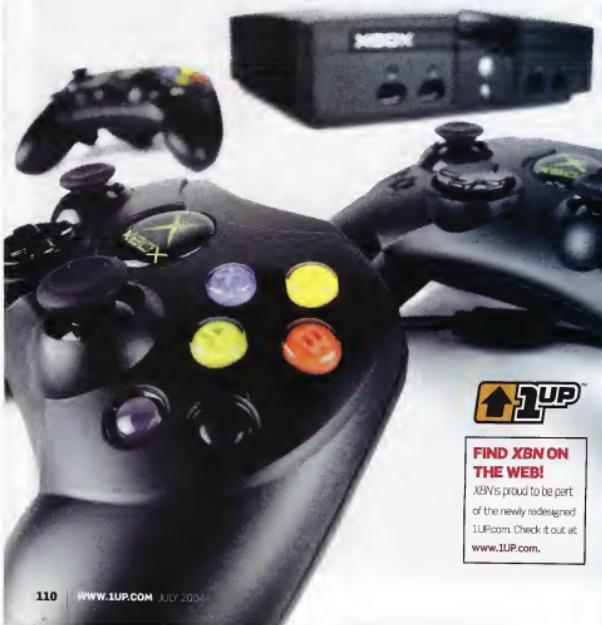
## EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW

After a sneak peak at this year's E3, *Xbox Nation* goes behind the scenes to get the full story on Digital Extremes' new first-person shooter.

## **PLUS:**

New RPG Vanguard, Def Jam, Battlefield: Modern Combat, Conker's, GunGriffon, GoldenEye: Rogue Agent. Also, Midway's Psi-Ops reviewed.

**Issue 17** of XBN on sale 07.13.04



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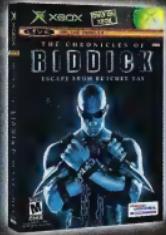


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DVD - JUNE 1, 2004

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Peter Chung, comes a  
stunning new vision  
of the *Riddick* universe!

DVD - JUNE 15, 2004

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